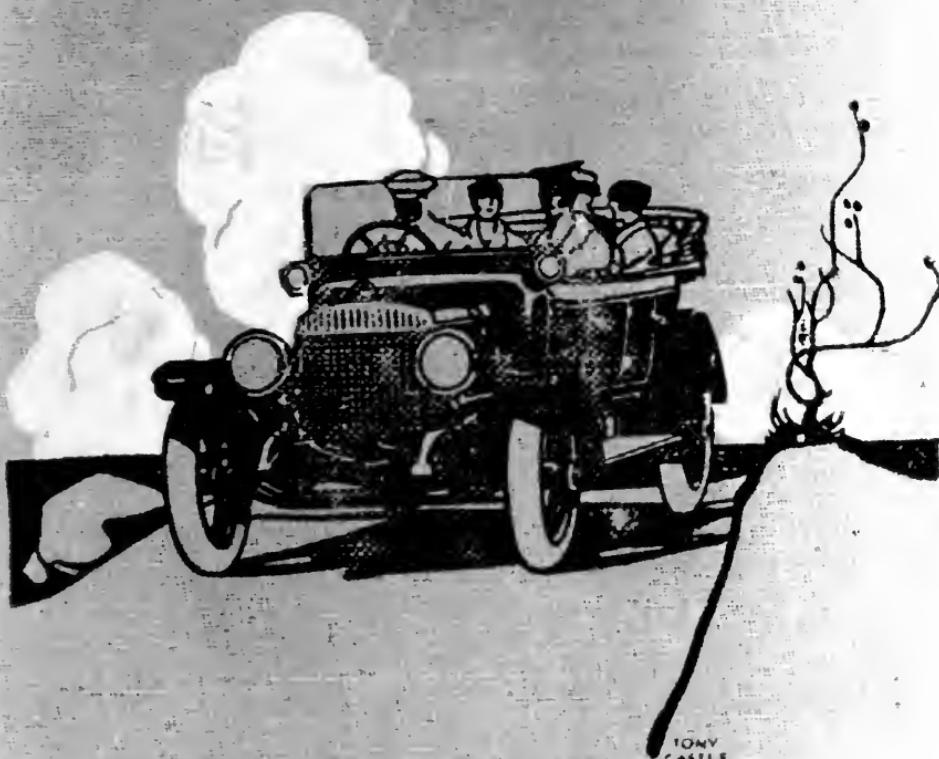


TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

A Guide for South Bound
Daimler Cars

"OWEN JOHN"





THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

Towards the Sunshine

A Guide to South-bound Daimler Cars

By
“ OWEN JOHN ”

A Little Book that tells of many Roads
and Ways to Places where the sun
shines earlier in the year than at home.

With Illustrations by
HELEN MCKIE AND E. W. HASLEHUST, R.B.A.

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1919

FESTL

P R E F A C E

"O the blue below the little fisher huts!"

I NEVER tire of that wonderful line of Kipling's. It headed the very first essay, or article, or tale, that I ever wrote on motor touring abroad, and all it implies will probably be ringing in my head when I write my last. One can never realise its meaning without a car. I expect the horses in the weary old rumbling coaches and diligences that used to bring invalids along the unending roads of France to die by the shores of the Mediterranean found fresh courage and picked up their paces when they first sniffed the scented air, and saw far beneath them the glorious azure sea, the red cliffs, and the trees and flowers of the true South ; one can still get something of the same sensation out of the railway carriage window to-day. But only in a modified form, for—I know not why—

578.57
LIBRARY

one seems to enjoy a view all the more when one has it almost to oneself.

Which is why mankind has chosen the car as the modern high-water mark of civilisation, the ideal at once of the lazy man and the energetic man, the sportsman and the dreamer, the healthy and the invalid. Not even when we can all fly will the aeroplane be the same thing, for where is the machine coming from that can dart or dawdle, can explore or idle, or that can just simply loaf the long happy day away as we can in a car that is all our own to do just as we like with ? I am old-fashioned. I want no *ultra-modern* hair-raising inventions. A good car—one of the best of its kind—for me. Therefore, very soon, we are all going south and east and west, and, may be, all the world over, in a Daimler.

Of all the books of travel that I own—for nobody was ever yet quite clever or foolish enough not to avail himself of the wisdom or the folly of his fore-runners when there was opportunity of

deriving value from their experiences—the volume I am fondest of is Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. He went out to see the world and found it so interesting that he seems to have very nearly used up all his writing paper before he really started. But that did not matter one bit; he did not want his readers to profit by what he saw of, but by what he thought about, men and things, and by what he thought they were meant to mean, and what he thought about that meaning. The only steadfast thing he made up his mind to adhere to was not to be steadfast. I can follow him in this; there is nothing so boring as the intensive pursuit of any object, especially in these days when all the world is sick of uniformity and shouting for relaxation of any kind for a change. Therefore I will promise faithfully to follow at a distance in Sterne's steps. Though, of course, because a car can go so much farther and faster than old horses, I shall be able to cover far more ground. Incidentally I may happen to

be of some use ; at all events I am going to tell of things as they struck me, and since I am an ordinary man, I hope that the things I have liked others will like as well. The last thing Sterne, as I have said, ever intended was to write in order to be of value to others. But since his account of his *Journey* altered the fashion of accounting for all journeys, perhaps, while he failed in his immediate object, he thereby made humanity his debtor.

The thing to avoid is the single idea, and the man to avoid is he who is armed with one. I am, I hope, a man with many ; in their multitude may my salvation be.

All this, as you may see by the heading, is in the nature of a *Preface*. Now, once upon a time a preface was a thing to be skipped, and so universal became this custom that quite respectable authors had to worry superior men of mark to write prefaces for them, so that they should gain eminence by their company. That is a thing I should hate to do, testimonials I

have no objection to in their proper place, but to be read as an afterthought, or as an appendix, may Heaven forbid !

I trust I have made clear of the manner of this work. I desire its chief value to lie in the fact that he who wrote it trusts he is of no different stamp to most of those who may read it, and that what delighted or pleased him may delight or please his fellow-men equally. He has a passion for stepping aside and he trusts they will not mind waiting, for his experience in this life so far more and more assures him that the parts of it we find enjoyment in mostly are those which are not advertised in italics or labelled by stars in the guide books.

Yet, for all this, he hates worry and abhors trouble, therefore when the alleged "best things" are the best, he has never any objection to availing himself of them. Which, naturally, is one of the reasons why we travel in a Daimler ; this work is not going to be insulted by chapters on how to repair motor cars. If disaster should happen, we need only

blame the human element and write to the insurance people to settle the money part of the business.

Touring by car is touring *in excelsis*, or, if you like it better, touring *par excellence*. Nothing else can take its place, or is likely to, though very possibly the new world-travel in the air may move one along faster. But that will be all ; from aloft all countries are flat and one might just as well run across a big map.

Touring by car has nothing in common with touring by rail. That is not touring at all, it is very seldom anything else than a succession of expensive nightmares ; one must be very keen or very hardened to enjoy the process. Circumstances alter cases ; if all one wants is a headquarters, by all means go by rail and walk or bicycle about and see all there is to be seen. But that is not touring, it is something quite different, and I have no business even to talk about it in these valuable pages.

I have kept the best part of motor-touring to the end of this discourse. A

car will take you wherever you want to go—and that is the perfectest joy of it. Nobody wants, even in order to get to the same place, always to be going to it by the same route. Yet, for some reason, even motorists have got into this bad habit ; for many the yearly run to the Riviera in the years before the war was almost always along the same roads, through the same towns, with stops even, as a rule, at exactly the same hotels. Which, to my mind, is a habit almost as bad as going by train, if not worse, for there is such a lot to see in this world, and we have such a short time to see it in, that it ought to be a crime not to make the best use of life while we have the opportunity. I have been lucky. I have had the chance of finding out things for myself, and I have availed myself of it. True, much of my knowledge has had perforce to be of a somewhat superficial kind, but that does not matter as long as the main memories of my little travels hold good. When they fade I shall revisit

them again afresh, and next time there will be in France an added delight, for we shall be travelling through a country full of men and women who were out against the same horror as we were, and our joys will be their joys ; we shall no longer be as strangers in somebody else's country, but comrades in the beautiful land we helped to save.

When next we put our cars across there in the blessed peace time we shall be going to a new France, a France where we no longer are foreigners but brothers and sisters in arms.

A fact which, you will all allow, ought to make a good deal of difference to the aspect in general. What difference it will make in the particular, I cannot tell. When France has her cupboards and cellars full once more, I shall know better ; meanwhile I will hazard a guess that even within a very few months we shall be surprised — and that most pleasantly.

One word more. This, my part of it at

any rate, has nothing to do with the war zone. That, in my opinion, will be everybody's own private affair. Almost everyone of us has a little shrine of his or her own to visit, and there are countless thousands of these. Universally we may want to see such places, such names, as Ypres, Verdun, Rheims, Louvain, St. Quentin or Albert. But we must visit alone some little cross amid a forest of other little crosses, or some scarred field where we know one who helped to make his country safe still helps to make it one with what was once a foreign land.

For these pilgrims I do not write, because no one is able to. For them there will exist—even already they are beginning to spring up—hotels and means to visit, maps, guides, and new and better roads. There will be many come in cars, there will be many in cabs, but I think there will be even more folk who, having come by rail, will be content to walk and gaze and wonder at the remnants of the mighty things brought forth by the folly and

ignorance of a country that invoked its own punishment—and received it.

The day for writing war handbooks is not yet ripe. This little volume is mostly about the other parts of France, for, thank God, there are thousands of square miles of that glorious country that bear, externally, as little mark of the Great War as does almost all of our own good England.

Not that even the South and West of France carry no scars at all; one cannot have a great nation like America arriving at one of its quiet towns and leaving no trace of its port of landing. Calais, Boulogne, Le Havre and Marseilles we know have been altered almost out of bodily recognition; we must not be surprised if, since one first made their acquaintance, other places have grown up and altered almost as a little girl can change into a glorious woman.

Still, I am sure that there is lots left to look at just as it was and ever will be, and I am even more confident that, whereas before we have been welcomed out of good

nature and ordinary hospitality, we shall in the future be welcomed for what we are and what we did.

That ought to make motor touring just across the Channel more popular than ever. Once I wrote—and got into trouble for so doing—that while motor touring in France was enjoyable because of the hotels, the same thing at home was often equally pleasant in spite of them. I wonder if it is as true now as it used to be ! Personally I have little doubt, for up in Flanders the little *cafés* and *estaminets* have "not altered themselves to suit their British customers, these have been but too glad to appreciate advantages they never found at home.

But, again, this is no subject for a sketchy preface, it should demand a chapter all to itself ; perhaps it may get one.

Like an *ex tempore* preacher, too fond of the sound of his own voice—for the writing of inconsequential prefaces is much easier work than recording useful information—I still find one more apology to make.

There is no up-to-date guide book to France published since 1869. I have a Murray of that date which is far more modern than any produced since. There have been many written since (perhaps the German product of Mr. Baedeker is not entirely unknown), but they all lack something very important, for in none of them are the old lost—now once again restored—provinces of Alsace and Lorraine included together with the Rhineland that the Peace Conference may add as well-earned interest.

That addition will want new guide books and maps and descriptions all of its own, and I shall wait for these before I begin to write about them. Not that I am quite ignorant. Ten years ago I visited all the old battlefields from the tiny field of Worth to Mars-la-Tour of tragic memory. But most of these places were in Hunnish hands then; when next I come to write about them I shall require the Gallic flavouring to inspire my pen.

So much for a preface. If, in what

follows, my experiences may be of some use, so much the better. But remember these pages are just as much concerning my own thoughts about things and places as of the things and places themselves.

Some of us have suffered too much lately from facts founded on fancies. Fancies founded on facts may come as a pleasant change.

“OWEN JOHN.”

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
FOREWORD		xxiii
1. ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS		3
2. THE APPURTENANCES OF MOTOR TRAVEL .		17
3. THE OLD TRAIL (PARIS, LYON, AVIGNON AND CANNES)		31
4. AN UNUSUAL WAY HOME (GRASSE-DIGNE- GRENOBLE-BOURG-ROANNE-ORLEANS) .		43
5. LE HAVRE TO ROUEN, GUERET, TULLE, FIGEAC, CARCASSONNE, QUILLAN, AND PERPIGNAN		55
6. LE HAVRE TO BLOIS, POITIERS, ANGOU- LÊME, AGEN, TARBES, AND PAU .		67
7. LE HAVRE TO LE MANS, TOURS, PERIGUEUX, VILLENEUVE, BAYONNE, AND BIARRITZ		83
8. S. MALO TO NANTES, LA ROCHELLE, SAINTES, BORDEAUX, DAX, AND BIARRITZ . .		97
9. ALONG UNDER THE PYRENEES		109
10. A DIVERSION INTO EASTERN SPAIN .		119

CHAPTER	PAGE
II. BORDEAUX TO THE RIVIERA BY WAY OF MONTAUBAN, TOULOUSE, CARCASSONNE, NARBONNE, ARLES NÎMES, MARSEILLES, TOULON, AND HYÈRES	133
12. ON NORTH AFRICAN MOTORING	155
13. ON FOREIGN MOTOR TOURING IN GENERAL	169

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The Cathedral, Sens. <i>Colour</i>	34
Pont-du-Gard	36
Digne	46
A Corner of Figeac	56
"A City Set on a Hill"	60
Mont-Louis	63
The Gardens of Perpignan	64
Bergerac	74
"Forgotten Castles"	76
The Old Castle at Mauvezin	78
Troglodytes	88
Mont-Saint-Michel	96
The Harbour Mouth, La Rochelle. <i>Colour</i> .	102
Mortagne, Portail-St.-Denis	104
Foix. <i>Colour</i>	113
For the Thirsty North	134
The Walls of Carcassonne	136
Béziers	138

xxii LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Nîmes, La Maison Carrée	142
The Ramparts of Aigues-Mortes	144
The Haunt of Artists	148
Peaceful Saint-Tropez	150
Amid the Esterels	152
A Street in Algiers. <i>Colour</i>	156
Sketch Map of France	182

FOREWORD

SINCE I wrote the pages that follow to assist those who wish to take their cars across the Channel and farther afield, and who yet fear the adventure, one of our great motoring organisations, the Automobile Association (acting, I am proud to say, on a suggestion thrown out by me in the pages of *The Autocar*), has taken a great step forward in the matter of smoothing the path of the would-be tourist.

Hitherto, as explained in the Chapter on the Preliminaries of Touring Abroad, while one could leave all details concerning foreign motor and driving licences, *trip-tyques*, passports, tickets and number-plates to one's club or association, nevertheless it was incumbent to write a cheque for the amount to be deposited, as a

guarantee that one would return with the car and would not dispose of it abroad to the detriment of the national exchequer.

In the days before the war this amount, being computed by weight, seldom came to more than fifty pounds for any one country. Now, however, things are altered. France, for example, has imposed a 70 per cent. *ad valorem* duty on all cars imported, which, in the case of a car worth a thousand pounds, would, to many people in these hard times, represent an amount not always immediately forthcoming without a very probable disturbance of one's private account.

No sooner was this *impasse* represented to the A. A. than the deed was done, and now all the intending traveller, if he happens to be a member of that body, has to do is to forward a proof to the A. A. that his bankers will guarantee he is worth the sum required, and no actual money at all need pass.

The very boldness of this new step may

have astounded some old-fashioned people, but it is the sort of thing, to my mind, that these organisations exist but to do. This is no place to praise or blame, but it must be confessed that by its action the Automobile Association has proved itself both a very valuable friend to motor tourists and of the greatest possible assistance to the future of motor touring as well.

Without it any nearly prohibitive duty maintained in the years of peace would have had an effect exactly contrary to that desired. An almost complete stoppage of motor touring in France would put an end to much of the growth of the *entente* that we found so real in the days of war.

Not that for one moment do I think that the present high tariff will be kept as it is, leaving no loophole for cars making temporary sojourns ; France is too full of good folk with an eye to the main chance ever to desire to keep good English money away from its shores. At the same time,

as before, some deposit will be necessary, and here the A. A. may find itself out to benefit a far larger class than ever before availed itself of its services.

The thanks of all motordom are due to the Association, and, as the originator of the idea, I take the opportunity of laying my little tribute at its feet for taking my suggestion up far more boldly and quickly than ever I deemed the question could be tackled.

At the same time we must not omit to tell of the advantages that members and associate members of the Royal Automobile Club share in this matter of foreign motor-touring. Members of this club were the first to tour by car on the Continent, and for many long years it was almost impossible to participate in the enjoyment except under their protection.

The Club (according to its secretary) is "the only institution authorised, and able to issue *carnets de passages en douanes* and *triptyques* free of charge. By which is meant that it possesses the

triptyques and *carnets* and can issue them straight away without any charge for the privilege, and the Club is the only body in the United Kingdom able to do this.

“ In return for these documents (as it stands guarantor) the Club will accept either a cheque for the sum involved and refund the amount in full when the car returns to this country, or, rather, quits the country for which the customs papers are issued, or, it will accept a letter of indemnity, which is a great convenience, especially in the case of heavy duty, etc. . . . These customs papers avoid all financial transactions with the customs authorities and obviously save loss in exchange.

“ It also issues the international travelling pass which serves as a licence for car and driver or drivers, used in conjunction with the ordinary British registration and British driving licence.

“ It also arranges and gives advice as to shipping, routes, roads, hotels, re-

pairers, insurance of all descriptions pertaining to motors and motorists at home, abroad, and marine ; in fact the Touring Department will undertake anything it can to make everything easy and comfortable, and will also give impartial advice in every possible way.”

So, my friends, it will be seen that we motorists are fortunate enough to have two little cherubs (one in khaki and one in blue) who sit up aloft and look after our welfare. You pay your money yearly and you take you choice.

It may not be economical to have such duplication of guardian angels, but there it is, and, after all, we motorists get all the benefits that come from such rivalry.

Anyhow, between them they make motoring on the Continent as easy as motoring at home.

Yet another contemplated innovation has loomed in sight since I put together this work, a project no less than a Channel Tunnel itself. Its advent is hailed on every side ; it will make all the differ-

ence in the world in the matter of taking one's car abroad, but—as it is not in the least likely to be an accomplished fact for, at least, five long years—I shall hope to refer to it more fully in a later edition.

“O. J.”

*Let us go hence. All roads are soft with mire,
The wet wind whistles o'er the pastures bare.
There is no comfort, save around the fire
To dream of lands where all things are more fair.
Whispers in trickling drops the dreary rain,
“ Weary all days till summer comes again.”*

TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

CHAPTER I

ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS

IT has often struck me that one reason why more people have never yet taken their cars over to France is that they magnify the difficulties of the crossing. Also they are filled with fears as to the safety of their cars ; one used to hear fearful tales of the damage done by careless and inexperienced sailors and by the men who work on the docks and wharves.

Once upon a time there may have been some truth in this latter notion, but even before the war the handling of cars was part of every day's work, while to-day I expect that the men whose duty it is are able to carry out the operation with their eyes shut. There must have been plenty of opportunity for practice just lately.

4 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

Nobody need be afraid nowadays. A few years ago I remember almost being forced below because I could not bear the thought of seeing my new car slung roughly by the hubs, dangling over people and water and docks on its way to some sort of resting place in a dark and gloomy hold. But I was brave, and once I even took a photograph of her underparts as she twiddled above my fearful head. That picture was at the time quite unique, although it was mostly mud and indistinctiveness.

But I must get on with the other reputed difficulties. The question of *Triptyques*. It is an awful word, it may even have been one of the drawbacks to travelling in itself. I have gone across under the auspices of the A. C. G. B. and I., the Motor Union, the R. A. C., and the A. A. All were equally efficacious, though some cost more than others. Perhaps now that we are brother allies we may soon get easier terms ; if we had one big organisation over here that looked after the interests of all motorists I feel sure that by

this time it would even be more simple still. We must stir someone up about it, there ought to be no difficulty at all, visitors should be welcomed on both sides.

Anyhow, at present we must conform to existing rules and regulations for want of new ones, and both of our present organisations put no difficulties in the way and render all paths quite smooth. If the payments are big—one gets it very nearly all back.

Now we come to the much more interesting subject of the various routes—pre-war ones, of course. Who can tell what the future may have in store for us. Already I hear of a Channel ferry on a big scale, and my optimistic soul foretells that one of the first benefits real peace-time will bring to us will be a Channel tunnel, which will solve all doubts and dangers and difficulties, especially if it is big enough to include, in addition to railway lines, a real road for the use of motor traction. Horses or foot passengers would perhaps find the journey a little too

6 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

lengthy ; besides, in modern times, horses are going to be back numbers.

But I am writing of things as they are —possibly, even now, of things as they were. A new edition may have other routes and ideas and opportunities.

I suppose the common or garden way to France that first suggests itself is the old-fashioned short passage from Folkestone to Boulogne. That, at all events, is the route to the battlefields and to most of the story places of the Great War. It is simple, it is hackneyed, and, in some senses, it is the quickest way to France. But to me it is the dullest ; the road to the south from Boulogne for many miles is a very tame thing, and at present its condition is very much altered from what it used to be. Personally it is a road I should avoid, even on my way to Paris. Yet, for all my criticisms, it exists and carries on.

The next passage, in order, is from Newhaven to Dieppe. Very often it is a pleasant journey, but sometimes otherwise, and when one gets to Dieppe one

ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS 7

is not free from all the drawbacks that the Boulogne-Paris possesses. One has still some way to go to get really into France, although, during the summer at



Southampton—the difficulty
the French have in pro-
nouncing it.

any rate, lots of people will be quite happy to abide in the neighbourhood and visit all the delightful, but rather well-known, beauty spots that lie around it.

Now we come to the Southampton *exit*, the chief drawback to which town is the difficulty the French find in pronoun-

8 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

ing its name. They make a mouthful of it, and, when you come to think of it, one cannot blame them. But as a starting point for a motor tour it beats all others,



Le Havre. Make all square with the
Customs officials.

for much bigger boats carry cars and passengers across, and they do not all go to the same place. Perhaps we shall find that, as did our hospital ships, they will some day make Rouen a port of disembarkation. That will be very handy, for from Rouen one can break away at right

ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS 9

angles and start fresh on any of the divers roads that lead one south, and of which I am going to treat of one by one.

Boats—big ships, I ought really to call them—can leave Southampton at midnight and be alongside at Le Havre by dawn the next morning. There one can have breakfast, make all smooth with the Customs officials, fill up with petrol and be off before the world is really awake and the shops are properly open. Unless, of course, one wishes to see Le Havre, a very interesting town and, when I last abode there, almost entirely British. The war has made Havre grow. I believe it is now one with Harfleur and far beyond, most of the British Army at one time or another have been its guests, and very well it did us. But, as Sterne says—and it is a motto I always keep in front of me when writing of motoring in other lands—one does not travel abroad to meet one's fellow countrymen, and therefore we will get on, leaving even fascinating and wonderful Rouen out as another city that knows all there is to

10 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

know about our soldiers and the rest of us.

From Southampton one can also take an equally nice boat for St. Malo and start away from that delightful town along the Napoleonic road that goes almost direct to Bordeaux. It is true the sea voyage is somewhat longer, but to some people that is an added advantage. This, however, seldom applies to me.

I have not exhausted the merits of Southampton. One can land there coming from Bordeaux by the boats of the Steam Navigation Company that have their home by London Bridge, which, by the way, is another point of departure I should have mentioned as one even nearer to most of us than Folkestone.

That is the route that pleases me most of all. To drive one's car down on a Saturday into the very shadow of St. Paul's, to deliver it over into the hands of real sailors, and to say good-bye to it until one meets it on the *quai* in the middle of the great wine city is as quick, as eco-

ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS II

nomical, and as pleasant a way of going south as there is. Good sailors may prefer to accompany it, I confess that I am in favour of taking a railway ticket from London to Bordeaux, although this is a more expensive way of starting if one is going with a full car load. However, it cuts both ways, one saves at least three nights *en route* and about five hundred miles of tyre wear, to say nothing of petrol and possible contingencies. The car fare is very little more than the amount charged for the passage from Folkestone to Boulogne, and, in the winter or spring, it is no end of a delight to begin one's tour in a climate which very often is at least two months ahead of that of the northern plains of France and the high tableland to the south of Paris.

On certain occasions there is yet another route. Some of the biggest ships in the world go direct from Southampton to Cherbourg, and one can cheat Neptune accordingly if one's desires happen to coincide with their passage. But I do

12 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

not think they will carry a car for the limited voyage ; that can go otherwise and the timid voyager pick it up on the other side, or, if he has a chaffeur, detail it to meet him where he lists.

Yet another line of big steamers carrying cars and passengers from Liverpool to La Pallice—a port which, I believe, has made “some” growth since the days when the United States began to take an active hand in the war. It is not a route I have travelled by, but for the good people of the North of England, the idea of saving a run across this country, in addition to the Channel crossing and four hundred extra miles in France, must appeal very strongly.

All the world does not live in London and the South, good folk of one idea only are very often far too prone to forget this when imparting information of any kind.

There may be other routes to France about to open or even now available, but I do not know them. The list I have re-

ON THE GETTING OVERSEAS 13

corded probably comprises all that are necessary or convenient.

The great thing the intending traveller has to bear in mind is that in taking his car across he is not doing anything strange or wonderful, and it will soothe his feelings more if he realises that the men to whom he intrusts it know much better how to take care of cars than he does. Put your car alongside the boat and go and get your luneh—unless the state of the sea outside makes it appear that such a proceeding is nothing but a pure waste of money and good food.

"I went straight to my lodgings, put up half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches. . . . 'The coat I have on,' said I, looking at the sleeve, 'will do. . . .'"

—LAURENCE STERNE.

CHAPTER II

THE APPURTENANCES OF MOTOR TRAVEL

SPEAKING generally, nowadays for foreign motor touring there is no need for anything unusual. By which I mean that what does for England will do equally well for France. Of course, there are exceptions ; for instance, one may dare provide garments for such places as the Riviera and Biarritz in April, or even March, which could never be required at home until May, at least, had begun. I remember a very early day in March at Marseilles when I rejoiced in white flannels and the awnings were up on the yacht—this was before the days of motors—and I also remember a first of April at Biarritz when there was snow on the tennis courts. One needs suitable clothes with a car, ornamental and ultra-fashionable garb is as much out of place there as on board a ship.

18 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

The observant traveller will notice all sorts and kinds of fur coats in evidence to a much greater extent in the centre and south of France than at home.



I was asked alms by a beggar in a fur coat
at Pisa.

In Italy, in the winter, he will see even more of them. The writer has been asked for alms by a beggar in a fur coat at Pisa and has refused ; he mistrusts people who dress above their position.

There is a good explanation for the

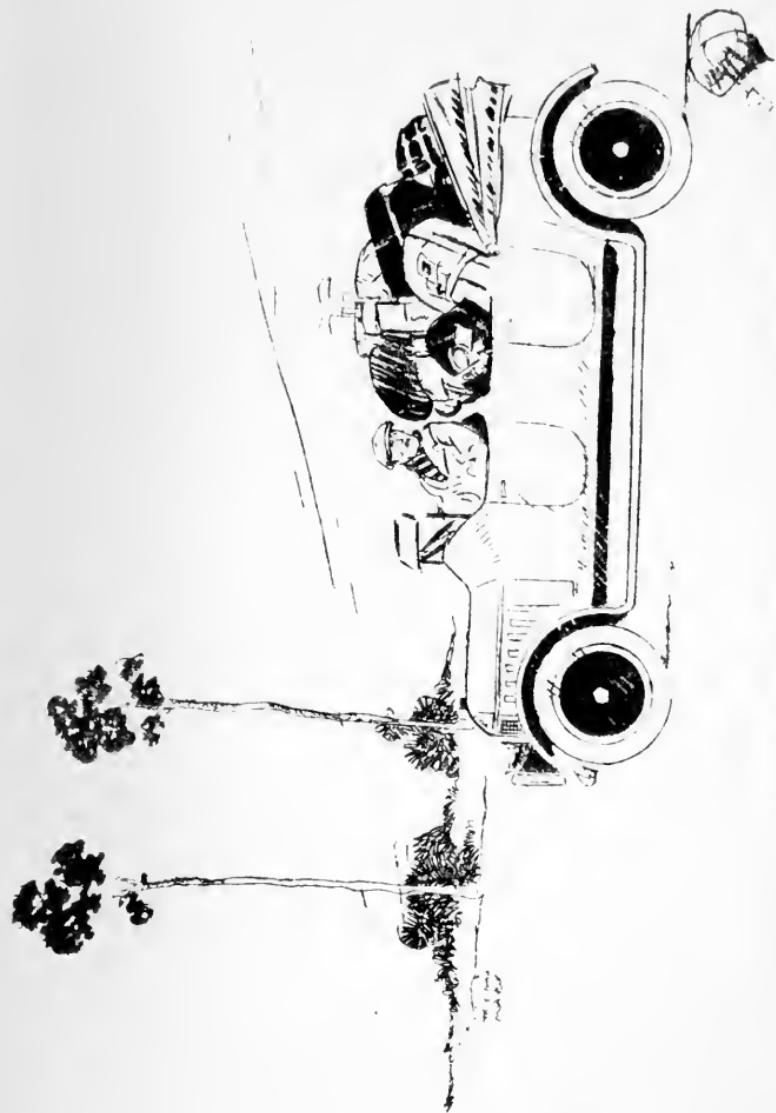
fur coat habit. Absence of rain. Not that there cannot be plenty of that everywhere, but in Europe one comes across a bigger proportion of dry cold than we get, and consequently fur coats have a longer innings. But on this subject we have plenty of excellent authorities now lately returned from foreign parts, and these also can testify on the advantages and disadvantages of wearing, like the gentleman in *Hiawatha*, the fur side outside.

Perhaps there has never been such a counter-revolution in clothes as has taken place of late years in motoring garments. When we began we used to dress up like the little man who was "clothed all in leather." And we had excellent reasons, for in those days we had neither enclosed bodies nor wind-screens—the latter used to be looked on as a most dangerous and treacherous device, just as the worthy folk who try to frighten us into buying unbreakable glass, *etceteras*, seem to suggest is the case to-day. Also motor bodies on open cars were constructed to catch all the winds

of heaven that blow, to-day we are lucky if we can see over the sides of some of the most advanced types. But the idea is sound, and a really good modern hood, one that answers its advertised description, is all one needs in a country where one wet day does not make it certain the day following will be like it. (Over here we can always make money by betting that to-morrow's weather will be very like to-day's.)

Now that I am on the subject of comfort in cars, the question of luggage crops up. I am a great believer in having what one wants ; I am also an advocate of sending on more to meet you, especially if one purposes to visit places that the newspapers like to describe as "fashionable." It does not cost much, and, if one allows plenty of time for the vicissitudes of French railways, one can generally rely on finding it at the haven where one would be.

I believe also in sending back, from anywhere, things you may find to be unnecessary ; nothing is more annoying than



Nothing more annoying than to lug about a lot of useless lumber, including
irresponsible souvenirs

to have to lug about in a car useless lumber, including irresponsible souvenirs. I like a grid behind a car—as long as it does not take the shape of a grid. The contrivance should be solid and should keep mud and dust off and out of the luggage, a benefit no grid I ever saw possessed. Two little bags are also better than one. There are many occasions when all one needs are just the necessaries for the night; in the little hotels one does not always dress for dinner, and if one need not untie and disturb the nest of the travelling bags on the grid, it saves no end of time next morning. I do not think I get dirtier as I get older, all I do is to get more economical of my time and trouble.

When I first went motor touring—and my first was the longest trip I have ever taken—motor bodies were not quite so roomy as they are to-day. It was a Daimler certainly, but Daimler bodies have improved since nearly as much as Daimler *chassis*. We took far too much luggage. I fancy one passenger had both a leather

coat and a Panama. Luckily we had a most capacious hood and no opportunities for using it. I have often wondered what would have happened had we had to put it up in a hurry, it must have been absolutely packed with uselessness, including brass ware, certain miniature wine casks and a couple of goatskin wine-gourds.

Remember also, by the way, that what tools one must take and may use—including the oilcan—should never be put in any place where other goods or people have to be disturbed to get at them. Many American bodies are still constructed on this principle.

I am looking for the designer brave enough to have his tool locker under the bonnet; there is always plenty of room there, to say nothing of the waste spaces on each side of the engine.

Tool cupboards, wherever they are, require locks and keys. Not that I have missed more tools in France than I have in England, but it is as well not to tempt unknown people too highly.

24 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

I have read many articles on how and where to carry spare covers, wheels, rims and what not. To my mind the best way to avoid trouble is to start a tour with four new tyres on the wheels, for in these days one has either to go a very long way or else meet with very bad luck in order to want more than a couple of auxiliary aids in the event of accident. Besides, France is not a barbarous country ; one can buy most things in most places, including tyres and tubes, and this is a truth that ought to be more widely circulated.

Take a tea-basket, it always comes in useful, and tea as well, one cannot always rely on getting an equivalent for "five o'clock" south of Lyons, at any rate. I recommend a luncheon basket in addition, no end of valuable time and quite a considerable amount of money can be saved by having picnic lunches instead of the rather solid midday meal so beloved of the French in the smaller provincial towns. In addition, there is quite a joy in prover-hunting on mornings before one

starts in French comestible *emporium*, now and then one stumbles on real discoveries, and at times one can also come across



One can also come across food, white wines and other local vintages.

quite good white wines and other local beverages.

Some of the happiest days I can call to mind are those in which an out of door lunch figures, quaint meals high upon a mountain side, under the umbrella pines on the seashore, amid orange groves, on the sand dunes, or even cooped up under

26 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

the hood in a whirling snowstorm on the way home across the Alpes Maritimes between the Riviera and the Rhone.

If I were a braver man I would write more on the subject of motor bodies. I



Quaint meals high upon the mountain side.

would discuss the rival advantages of the totally enclosed and the totally exposed, together with the merits of the limousine and the landaulette. But, as most people have the kind of body they want on their own cars, I do not see the use; for very few of us, in these days of super-super taxation, at any rate, are likely to buy a

special car for a tour with no idea of the kind that will suit us best in our ordinary avocations. Therefore we will let the matter slide, although I cannot refrain from giving it as my opinion that one gets most out of life if one travels in an open body that lets every one see where he is going and what he is passing—provided always that it has a hood that is a real protection and not merely a means of providing a succession of unexpected shower-baths.

*Let us go hence. I know a wide straight track
Tree-bordered, one long pathway to the sun,
Where the good car may never feel the lack
Of opportunity her best to run.
Empty and flat, it waits for you and me
Like the moon's trail across the evening sea.*

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TRAIL

BEING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE USUAL
OR ORDINARY ROUTE TO THE RIVIERA

THERE is very little need to go into much detail as to this way of getting to the south of France ; nine cars out of every ten that make the journey use it and will continue to do so unless their occupants prefer to make a slight *détour* and come along through Arras and Amiens in order to see for themselves the ravages of the late unlamented Hun and all that we did and had to do in order to stop him from doing more.

But that jaunt will have chroniclers of its own, my work is to get past all modern history and down to places of more ancient fame.

There are no obstacles to speed, except those created by ever altering conditions

32 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

of repair and reconstruction all along through Montreuil (35 kil.)—our late G. H. Q., and a little town that is perhaps more picturesque than any other the road passes for a very long way—Abbeville (80 kil.)—the British advanced base for many long weary months, and much bombed towards the end by enemy aircraft, with a cathedral as typical and as delightful as one can wish to see—Poix, Grandvilliers (127 kil.) to Beauvais (156 kil.). This last town has put up road travellers from Britain to Europe for a thousand years and more, but our fathers would never have imagined that to many of their descendants it could be left behind by them as not far enough away from England for even a first resting-place. So we, too, will pass through it if we are making Paris our stop, and after Ressons take either the roads via Meru to the east or Herionville to the west, and come to Pontoise, just 200 kilometres, or 125 miles, from Boulogne.

Here we are getting metropolitan and

motor touring is not much amusement. The road wants watching ; the first time I ever tried to do the trip all in one we lost our way badly.

Perhaps the indications are better now ; on that well-remembered date it was both dark and foggy, so perhaps we may be forgiven for discovering a brand new and most roundabout entrance into Paris.

All roads used to lead to Paris, and most of the signposts still point out how to get there. But we, being south-bound travellers, have no use for Paris at present, so, turning sharp right, make for St. Germain-en-Laye and Versailles, a place of such world-fame that I dare not suggest doing anything but stopping there for a meal, at any rate, if not for the night.

At the same time Versailles is not our objective, so, leaving there, we turn right-handed again and make for Melun. There are many different roads we may take ; some prefer to go via Juvisy and Corbeil to Fontainebleau, whence to Sens, passing just south of Montereau, is a road just

34 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

far enough from Paris once again to make pace a pleasure.

Sens is a dear old spot, or was, and affords a good opportunity to pull up and take in an entrancing prospect of a small French provincial town. Once upon a time it was one of the biggest stopping places for all the world between Paris and the South, and one still gets quite an old-fashioned thrill in the spaciousness of its large and now quiet hotels.

After Sens one lets the car out, for there is no reason why, outside the villages and towns, one should refrain. Two routes lie before one across the Côte d'Or to Dijon, one through Joigny and Auxerre and Avallon, and the other, a more hilly route but more direct, by way of St. Florentin, Tonnerre, and Montbard. A good deal depends on the weather; in the winter snow lies long on the desolate hill-tops above Les Laumes, and I have vivid remembrances of a Daimler long ago dropping down into Dijon in the dusk white with accumulated drift and with



THE CATHEDRAL, SENS.

passengers too cold to light up until they were actually made to.

Not that one need go through Dijon at all if one takes the ordinary road by Auxerre. Then one comes direct to Châlons-sur-Sâone, and after that one's track lies by the side of the Sâone through Macon all the way to great Lyon itself.

Lyon is a very big and very industrious place, so big that one may just as well leave it behind and make direct either for little Vienne—where there is much to see and admire—or to Valence, to my mind the proper beginning of the South we are in search of.

Here things are quite different to the land one has left behind ; for Valence is more than five hundred miles from Boulogne, and one has passed from the usual to the unusual. Vineyards one has got accustomed to since Dijon, throughout the great plain of Burgundy one has to look quite hard to find any other form of husbandry. There are oxen in the carts

and in the ploughs, there is colour in the clothes of the inhabitants, and, best of all, the tiles on the houses are of the same semi-cylindrical shape that they affect all round the shores of the Mediterranean.

The Rhone itself—the Sâone one welcomed above Chalons loses its identity below Lyon—is a name of fascination, and as one runs along its banks through an ever fertile plain framed by high hills on either side one cannot help feeling that one has arrived, however far one's real destination may be away. There are roads on both sides of the river ; avoid the western one, although the surface may be smoother, for there one can meet with more numerous crossings than on any other road in France I have ever known. Next is Montélimar, and then, some fifty miles on, comes Orange, and here one simply must get out and see the Roman theatrette and other remnants of the days when Mediterranean civilisation pushed far up the mighty river. After Orange one quickly finds Avignon—change here for Nîmes, Les



PONT-DU-GARD.

Baux, Arles and all Romance that ever was—whence, if one can tear oneself away, and if the Mistral is not blowing, you turn the car's bonnet south-east for Aix, Brignolles, Fréjus and the Riviera as advertised on all the posters and in the fashion papers.

From Boulogne to the Italian frontier is roughly just a thousand kilometres, or six hundred and twenty-five miles. The early part is dull, and, in the winter, certain to be cold. Nor is there any certainty that the latter half will be otherwise, but for all that there is always a very good chance that, even in March or earlier, one may come into warmer weather and sometimes see quite a lot of the sun. But with an all-day sun at that time of the year it is almost certain that, in the Rhone valley at any rate, one will have an all-day wind as well, and the particular wind that blows the clouds away in the neighbourhood of Avignon gets more curses than any other wind that blows anywhere else.

But one may be lucky—I have sat on

the broken bridge at Avignon (where the children dance) in blazing hot sunshine long before April—and one may not. A good car, a real hood, and a straight road ahead in bad weather does away with the need for grumbling—and to-morrow it is always sure to be fine.

To dilate on all the wonders one passes by on this road is to paint the lily; besides, the number of books written on them is innumerable. You see, the road follows the P. L. M. Railway all the way, and, if one has the time, one can see these things that way just as easily if not quite so quickly.

But linger at intervals and enjoy the scrub forests before one gets to Fréjus. Very likely they will be the last glimpses of rurality you may have for as long as you meditate abiding on the Riviera.

I have never recommended the lovely shore between Cannes and Italy as a motoring centre. There is only one real road—with variations—and the traffic on it is often very much like the London

streets on the way to Hurlingham in the height of the season.

Cars are very useful things wherever one may be, but I am writing of motor touring, not of going out to tea or doing anything in them that any ordinary hiring taxicab will do just as well.

*Let us go hence. I know a ruin grim
Perched on the edge of beetling black-browed rock.
Where all the night the weary mournful hymn
Of hopeless souls the cruel white stars do mock.
Never a pious peasant dares that way
Between the sunset and the breaking day.*

CHAPTER IV

AN UNUSUAL WAY HOME OVER THE ALPS FROM THE RIVIERA

THE most unusual circumstance about this route lies in the fact that the first part of it is as a rule impracticable before April, and the second part is, except for the crossing of the “divide” between Lyon and Roanne, an escape from the rigours of the high ground between Dijon and Sens. Neither half saves any ground, but both of them break, as it were, new country.

Of course the ordinary method of returning from the Riviera is by the usual road described in the last chapter. But most folk like novelty, and after much travelling along more or less flat ground it is a change to put in a little mountaineering *en auto*. Besides, one can see, at times, glimpses of the real Alps, even mighty Mont Blanc appears occasionally

44 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

as a comparatively near neighbour. Also the types of inhabitant are new, and in April one can almost visualise the traditional merry Swiss peasant as pictured on the condensed milk tin.

Pack all your best clothes and light attire in your big trunk and send them home by the *petite vitesse*, you will not want them for months. Then say good-bye to extravagant civilisation, get in your car, and turn off between Nice and Cannes by the racecourse at Cagnes and make for Grasse, the little town where all the most expensive scents and crystallised flowers used to come from before chemists found out what wonderful things could be made from aniline dyes and other coal-tar products.

At Grasse put on all your overcoats and get out all the rugs, you will need them. The driver also should be told not to look round, and must not be encouraged to talk. Then the climb begins. For miles he will have his work cut out to tackle properly all the corners and gradients of

the road, while the passengers can keep on saying good-bye to the blue sea and the palm trees far beneath them, for at each turn and twist some or other part of the coast keeps coming into view, all gradually growing more distant and more beautiful.

At last the end arrives and a big white stone marks it, after which, if they are nervous, the passengers will have plenty to look at in the shape of huge boulders, overhanging precipices and hair-raising road curves. But there is nothing really to be afraid of, for other cars are few and far between, and perhaps the long careless carts of the innumerable wood-cutters are the most dangerous obstacles to be encountered. The road keeps just below the snow line for the most part—this, of course, depends to a great extent on the time of year—but in its aspect it might be a thousand miles from the dusty coast hardly thirty miles behind.

So one comes to the little town of Castellane, with its church apparently put in the most unapproachable part of it, and,

having dropped a thousand feet to get into it, one finds one has promptly to climb even higher to get out of it again. But it has its compensations ; from above it one may get a sight of the vast Alps, and if it happens, as it probably will, to be getting on for eventide, the rosy glow all along the line of the snow-capped mountains will reward for much complaining. Then comes a gloomy valley and a road alongside of a mountain river very reminiscent of many bits of Scotland, after which Digne arrives quite suddenly, and here one is very wise to stop and spend the night.

From Digne there are three routes, and the least direct in distance is the more-favoured one. One may go via Sisteron and the Col de la Croix Haute, or one may go by Gap and, turning west, pick up the same good road. Some prefer to avoid that pass—which may or may not be snow-covered—and to keep on up and downhill by Corps and Vizille ; it all depends on one's car and the weather as to which is the most pleasant and enjoyable.



DIGNE.

AN UNUSUAL WAY HOME 47

Anyhow, they all end at Grenoble, and here ends the mountaineering part of the trip, for the lie of the land all the way to Bourg is just the pleasant hill country one might expect in east Devonshire, in Ire-



The Guardian in a cocked hat sells picture postcards of the Cathedral.

land, or even in parts of Brittany. Perhaps it is the flowers in the hedges and in the fields that make this part of the spring journey so home-like.

Bourg is "three-starred"; that is

48 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

to say, the church of Brou with its tombs and its stained-glass is a sight not to be missed. It is almost unique ; perhaps the mixture of the civil and sacred powers that are responsible for its preservation assists in the idea. But the guide books tell you all about it, and the guardian, in a cocked hat, sells picture postcards of all parts of it from a stock he keeps on the steps of the altar itself.

From Bourg one can join the ordinary Paris road at Chalon-sur-Sâone, or one can hark back to Lyons, leave it behind, and, crossing the high ground to the west of it, make for Roanne and pick up the mighty Loire at Moulins, and so home via Nevers and Orleans to Paris. Or, if the season is on, one may run from Roanne to Vichy, and see something of the wonderful Puy de Dôme country, an excursion quite out of place in a mere run to the South and back. I do not recommend it for this reason. If one goes to the Riviera because it is the time of the Riviera season, for climatic reasons this is a sound argument why it is

not the time to enjoy almost every other part of France.

But it is always good for one's education to know the whereabouts of places one hears much of ; this is the sole reason why I here mention Vichy and the Puy de Dôme.

Because we began this trip at Boulogne that is no reason why we need end it at the same place. Indeed, having got as far west as Orleans, I am of opinion that we should be foolish to waste time and tyres on the cold and indifferent roads around and north of Paris. Other ways are far easier and shorter ; my advice is that after Orleans one should run along flat, fast roads by the way of Chartres, Dreux, Évreux and Rouen, and put oneself and one's car on board at Havre for England. Every town I have mentioned is famous for its cathedral. Rouen itself, as all the world knows, stands out above all others in its unrivalled beauty.

To me the great object of every trip I make across France, or anywhere else, is

the seeing of new things and places. That, during the war, my work took me almost always over the same ground in France is a proof that it was not of my own seeking.



I have more faith in a French hotel-keeper finding a way out of a gastronomical quandary than I have of his compeers over here.

In war one has to go where one is told. In peace one can go wherever one likes, and that is only one of the advantages of it. Certainly the almost direct cut across France I have discussed in this chapter

could not be more diverse in character and scenery, and, what is almost as good, every town on the route contains as good hotels as are to be found throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Which, especially when it is not summer time, is a thing not to be despised. Of course, what one may get to eat in these days is still somewhat problematical, but I have more faith in a French hotel-keeper finding a way out of a gastronomical quandary than I have of his compeers over here.

I think I shall have to devote a whole chapter to hotels—and hotels.

*Let us go hence. I know a white-walled town,
With gates to Emperors and Popes oft barred,
Where an old plane-tree now bends gently down,
O'er the filled moat by long-gone sieges marred,
And on the road a fancy pattern weaves
Of sunlight flickering through its dancing leaves.*

CHAPTER V

FROM LE HAVRE TO THE MEDITERRANEAN
BY WAY OF ROUEN, ORLEANS, GUERET,
TULLE, FIGEAC, CARCASSONNE AND
PERPIGNAN

THIS, for the first two hundred miles, is one of the fastest roads in France, and the big towns only want looking at for the sake of their cathedrals. Some of these we have discussed in the last chapter, and even when we break new ground across the big Loire south of Orleans we can get along without missing very much until after La Chatre we find a new and more hilly country. La Chatre is not a good place to stop, and Issoudun is not much better. But both are good samples of French market towns, and I remember a very warming lunch at the latter place one cold snowy day in 1911. Then comes Guéret, and here are good hotels and interesting

56 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

objects to visit. But it is high ground, and getting higher ; perhaps I ought to warn tourists that all the road henceforward is not necessarily at its best in the winter or the beginning of spring.

From Guéret to Figeac is an almost unexplored country for English cars ; the scenery is alway changing, the roads are well graded, and it is hard to realise that one is often well over three thousand feet above sea-level. There are woods that are forests, streams that are rivers, and villages that are unchanged from a hundred years ago. One almost expects to meet stage-coaches and highwaymen, though perhaps the new condition of things has awoken up the old-time sleepy type of peasant that used to inhabit this quaint story-book land.

Then, on a sudden, comes Tulle, the place that is made famous by its name, but which really is only one long, straggling street down in a ravine very much like the Golden Valley above Stroud in Gloucestershire. Also they made munitions here



A CORNER OF FIGEAC.

and the fame of their rifles has long been celebrated.

Another sixty miles over high hills leads to Figeac, but through scenery that almost halts the car itself to take it all in. All along the south-eastern horizon is the range of the Cévennes, mountains immortal for ever with literary folk, because it was amongst them that the great R. L. Stevenson took his travels with a donkey one autumn long ago.

Travelling with a donkey and a package that would not hold on properly must have been very trying, even for a philosopher ; perhaps that is why most of the book is about the people he met and what they thought and said.

I forget if he ever came to Figeac, but if he did I only hope he enjoyed the little *Hôtel des Voyageurs* as much as we did. Even now I can remember some of the excellent food we ate, and also the local liqueurs we sampled. The town lies far below the mountains that encircle it, and one gets quite giddy at the corners of the

58 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

roads that lead into it. I should like to spend a lazy month at Figeac when I get too old to enjoy moving about.

Then comes one of the many Villefranches down in the bottom of another



I can remember the excellent food we had, and also the local liqueurs we sampled.

valley, and thence all the way to Gaillac and Castelnau-dary is up and down, in and out, and through what they used to call really "Romantic Scenery." Too remote much of it is even for picture postcards, and that, in the South of France, means a good deal.

For it is the South ; geographically, Gaillac is on the same latitude as Monte Carlo, although one would never imagine it in the beginning of April. Also the wines and fruits are those of Gascony, and odd little delicacies creep into the *menus* and inform the diner that he is sampling an entirely new gastronomical district.

All along to the east still tower the jagged Cévennes, between the road and their farthest crests lies the wonderful Tarn country of craters and gorges and caves, a paradise for the geologist. But that is a country belonging more to the Puy de Dôme District, and no fleeting motorist can do much more than just gaze and pass on, especially if he is in search of warmer weather.

So to Castelnau-dary, which would be very interesting were it not for the infinitely superior attractions of its neighbour, the great, wonderful, and unique *Cité* of Carcassonne.

The road between them is good, but would be dullish if it were not for the

excitement caused by looking out for the first glimpse of the castellated towers and battlements of this first Wonder of France. When I first saw it I thought I had seen it before, until I realised that I was thinking of every great mediæval stained-glass window I had ever seen and of the backgrounds of some of the most marvellous old pictures the world possesses.

There is nothing like Carcassonne ; towns such as Rome and Pisa never burst on one's senses as do these old walls.

The French Government is very proud of its possession and takes almost too good care of it. When I first knew it there was no hotel where one might stay in the old citadel, one could even get no food of any description, for, be it understood, the modern town of Carcassonne is more than a *kilomètre* away from the fortress and quite a different story altogether.

In the new town there are plenty of hotels and any quantity of souvenir shops ; indeed, I must confess that one gets almost tired of seeing nothing but re-



"A CITY SET ON A HILL."

E. W. HARRIS & CO.

productions of its almost theatrical silhouette on everything one looks at or buys or eats or drinks. They ride that hobby to death, except that there are always new visitors to come to see it.

When I was last there I think a special excursion of Hun students was doing it thoroughly and in a covey. They spoilt the illusion; perhaps it will be better now. Anyhow, I should have loved to have seen it on Armistice night; I will warrant the inhabitants lived up to their setting. One *must* stop at Carcassonne, indeed, nobody but a speed-merchant would think of doing otherwise.

Our road runs east now if one wants to go along the littoral towards Marseilles, but if one still hankers after the less-known, drive due south and come along by Limoux and Quillan to Perpignan, nestling between the end of the Pyrenees and the blue Mediterranean. That road interests of itself; just south of Quillan it goes through—in company with a railway and a river—a pass narrower even than



A special excursion of Hun students was doing it thoroughly.



E.W.HASLEHUST.

MONT-LOUIS.

Cheddar cliffs and far higher. (But, as a man of Somerset, in my opinion, not half so lovely.) One can keep on by the R. N. 118 and indulge in climbing into the



The inhabitants look like
Spaniards more than
anything.

snow and fairyland of the mountains to Mont Louis, the highest military station in all France, but I do not recommend the route for timid folk. Never have I driven along such skiddy, narrow tracks, and never

64 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

have the depths beneath seemed so gloomy and so absolutely unguarded. But Mont Louis is very picturesque in itself, and its tiny hotel does one very well, especially as regards little trout.

The prudent traveller turns eastward after the gorge and runs along a very pleasant highway through ever-changing scenery to Perpignan. Now he is in the South, and as a rule it is really quite warm with proper warmth. Not the sheltered and treacherous climate of the Riviera, but an atmosphere that always allows hot-house things to flourish out of doors, and where the people look far more like Spaniards than anything else. Here one rests, and here I end this long jaunt, for in all France one can get no farther South.



E.W.HASLEHUST.

THE GARDENS OF PERPIGNAN.



*Let us go hence. I know a village street
Where tinkling goat bells sound about each door,
And dusky maidens rest their sun burned feet
Around the time-worn fountain, that doth pour
Cool sparkling water into pitchers old
That in the sunlight gleam like hammered gold.*

CHAPTER VI

TO THE PYRENEES BY WAY OF LE HAVRE,
BERNAY, BLOIS, POITIERS, ANGOULÊME,
BERGERAC, AGEN, AUCH AND TARBES

OF course one can quite well begin this journey from Boulogne, but I, for one, prefer the Southampton-Havre crossing, because it saves time, tyres, petrol and several hundred *kilomètres* of uninteresting country.

Also I prefer the bigger boats and the opportunity of either sleeping in a comfortable cabin or suffering unseen.

Perhaps by this time there may be a ferry that will carry motors from Havre to Trouville or to Honfleur. Before the war such a convenience did not exist, therefore the traveller had either to run to Rouen where the first bridge across the Seine exists, or make use of the motor-ferry at Caudebec or Quilleboeuf. I have

68 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

invariably made use of the latter. The distance is less than forty miles from Havre, and presents no difficulties at all if one does not mind waiting while it puffs across.

One takes the lower road out of the



Suffering unseen.

seaport, turning south at Lillebonne, a little place that has a real antiquity of its own in the shape of the remains of a Roman theatre, and coming to the ferry just where the river begins to realise it cannot continue to be an arm of the sea for always. Quilleboeuf used to be a quaint old-looking

semi-fishing village ; what it is like now I do not know, one hears many tales of the marvellous changes that *depôts* and camps have effected around oversea bases. But I am quite sure that after Quilleboeuf nothing much new has happened, and that all the quiet rambling countryside—not at all unlike many bits of the West of England—between Pont Audemer and Bernay is just as it ever was and ever will be. Bernay is a good place to lunch ; an early start from the steamer with all the formalities of the Customs and the filling up makes one quite ready for one's food. One might even reach Blois, but over a hundred and fifty miles on the first day out under new conditions is perhaps a little too far except with the luck of a very early start, a thing by no means always a certainty from Le Havre.

Therefore one can stop at Montagne and be quite comfortable at the little Hotel du Grand Cerf, a very excellent introduction to the smaller towns and inns of France and a very marked contrast to the

hostelries one would have to be content with in towns of the same calibre at home.



All the formalities of the Customs.

Blois is an easy run, and perhaps one would pass through it and beyond it if it had not the attractions it has. For Blois

is a place that must be seen. The wonderfully preserved old *château* would be well worth a visit even if it did not possess all the tales and traditions and history that every stone of it is full of. Also the hotels are excellent, and it should not be forgotten that, except at Châteauroux, which is a dull place, the next town wherein to lie is at Limoges, another hundred and fifty miles away.

But so much depends on the weather and the time at one's disposal. Certainly there is little attraction in the scenery one passes through to keep one back if the main idea is to get to the south as quickly as the car is able.

Limoges is, more or less, a French equivalent for our Potteries, although its immediate surroundings are a great deal pleasanter. Also, as a city, it easily beats any or all of the Five Towns, and perhaps the worst thing about it is the frequently greasy state of the roads in its immediate neighbourhood. As a matter of fact it is only the smell from its many ovens that

makes for any resemblance to Bursley at all. The Hotel Moderne is frankly commercial, but none the worse for that; T. G.'s in France seem to know more about good food and wine than their brothers at home.

A pleasant day's run of yet another hundred and fifty miles lands one at Ville-neuve, as quaint an old city as one can find in all France. But long before here there are many other places to see, including Chalus, where our King Richard Cœur de Lion finished his earthly career. Very little of the castle is left to-day, but there is still a tower that dominates the farm buildings that surround it, and it may be that from its top the fatal arrow was sped. At any rate one can like to think so.

The road from Limoges to the south is a hilly one, and the long straight highways of Northern and Central France are forgotten in this more primitive country. But they are on the whole good and full of interest, for here one has got into the vine country and there are oxen in the fields

and in the long wine carts that block the roads and swing and creak from one side of them to the other. One cannot hurry ox-traffic, one simply waits.



Périgord Pies—They expect you to buy
more to send home as souvenirs.

Périgueux, too, is a nice little town with a wonderful Byzantine cathedral far older than it looks, an excellent hotel and a speciality in the shape of the world-famed Périgord pies. They give you them with

every meal, and I think they also expect you to buy more to send home as souvenirs. And very nice, too; I much prefer such presents to the useless lumber one so often gets instead.

Then comes Bergerac, a most picturesque little place on the river Dordogne, with old houses by a bridge that make a very delightful picture. I stopped here once on a Good Friday evening, and made the acquaintance of many new kinds of fish because I could get no meat. Nowadays such a *contres* would leave me cold, and I should esteem myself lucky to get either. I remember here tasting carp for the first time wittingly, and I also have a note that another dish consisted of a mixture of eels and prunes. Odd, but not at all bad; I am not one of those who object to eels because they are like snakes.

Cyrano (in the story) came from here, but the inhabitants do not seem to make a fuss about him. Perhaps his ever-famous nose grew as it did from its associations with the local smells, because—



BERGERAC.

E.W. HASLEHOUST.

though I may forget everything else—I can never banish entirely from my memory a most enduring and unendurable stench that I once came across in this otherwise pleasant little riverside city.



Bergerac (where Cyrano came from), the
unendurable stench I shall never forget.

So to Villeneuve-sur-Lot, amid up-and-down, highly-cultivated, odd-shaped fields and vineyards, with many little century-old wine presses jostling the latest things in viticultural machinery.

I liked Villeneuve and its Hotel Gache. It reminded me much of a Spanish town,

especially its arcaded square and the little birds that were put before us at dinner. Also it, and its surroundings, are most picturesque, perhaps it is that about here one fully grasps the fact that at last one has come into the south that one has come so far to find.

Just south of Villeneuve is Agen, and Agen is quite an important and rather a dull place. It is on the canal that joins the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and it is also on the main road from Bordeaux to Marseilles. It has an excellent hotel and a glorious wide river, but somehow it is a place that always makes me want to get on and not to linger.

After Agen, running due south, one comes into quite a different country from any yet seen. Here there are high hills, almost mountains in places, land out of cultivation, grass parks, desolate country houses, long, low, huge farmhouses, and a general air of sombre brigandage. But only in appearance ; from certain petrol troubles that arose one day I found the



E.W.HASLEHUST.

"FORGOTTEN CASTLES."

natives were as kind and helpful as those of anywhere else. One should see the church at Lectoure from the outside, and according to the guide books there are also Roman relics that should be visited.

Then comes Auch, a hillside town with a wonderful but little known cathedral, and a view of the Pyrenees that is like a panorama suddenly unfolded.

I am a great admirer of the Pyrenees ; some day we shall know and appreciate them as the fashion has been hitherto to appraise the Swiss Alps. Very likely the war will assist us to alter our opinion, and our new and lasting friendship will help us to enjoy their beauties all the more.

The road from Auch to Tarbes is very pleasant and extremely picturesque, the mountains growing ever higher and more beautiful as one approaches them. Tarbes is a cheerful town lying in a plain beneath the foothills, and makes an excellent centre for excursions to all sorts of lovely

78 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

places. Of course, if one desires, one can get nearer the mountains and abide at Lourdes—not recommended for the ordinary traveller—at Argeles, at Bagnères-de-Bigorre, or at Luz, as we did, or even—snow permitting—at little Gavarnie itself, a village higher above the sea than Ben Nevis and just below the Cirque de Gavarnie, one of the most wonderful and fearsome natural freaks in all the lovely country.

All of these places are long used to tourists and are getting just as used to motorists. But pleasant and interesting as they are, my jealous nature never, for some reason, can enjoy “billed” sights like those I discover for myself.

Which is where the motor comes in. I cannot believe that mankind in the mass has ever yet realised in the least what a difference cars have made to touring. Now we can go where and when we like, nor are we bound to the neighbourhoods of railways and towns for anything we may want to see or do.



THE OLD CASTLE AT MAUVEZIN.

I ever do my best to drum this gospel into the ears of the public, but I fear that I shall be dead long before it becomes generally recognised even by owners of cars. And it is all so easy, so simple, and—so cheap.

*Let us go hence. One long flat highway runs
Between the river and the tended fields.
Where sprouting vine-stumps hide the thunder-guns
That from the hailstones are as angel-shields.
And straggling mule-teams drag the swaying casks,
While 'neath their shade the sleepy carter basks.*

CHAPTER VII

LE HAVRE (OR BOULOGNE, VIA ROUEN) TO LE MANS, TOURS, ANGOULÊME, AGEN, AND BIARRITZ

THIS route is not only one of the most direct from England to Biarritz, but also has the inestimable benefit of being one of the warmest. That is to say, it gives all high hills a miss, a point which the routes lying to the eastward do not possess. It can be used even to get to the Riviera, if one is in no hurry and does not object to a considerable *détour*, for the same advantage applies and all sorts of new countries and conditions can be experienced. I might explain here that, after Angoulême, perhaps a more immediate run to Biarritz *via* Bordeaux would save mileage, but I am not writing entirely of short cuts; my desire is rather to draw attention to new routes.

84 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

Besides, part of that road is another tour altogether.

One leaves Havre as before, crosses the Seine at Quilleboeuf, and, as far as Bernay, keeps to the same route as the tour in Chapter VI. (As a matter of fact, one picks up the same road again from Bergerac to Agen, but the intervening part avoids all the high ground around Limoges, and the running is certainly easier and more in favour of respectable speed.)

After Bernay, with nothing very interesting to see, one comes to Le Mans, a big town and, in 1914, a place of considerable importance to our Army, since one could not be quite certain in those days if the Hun would not be able to get Paris, while his occupation of the Channel port was a contingency not entirely to be neglected. However, our stay at Le Mans was not for long, and perhaps by this time it is as quiet and pleasant a place as ever it was. It makes a very good stopping-place for the first day out ; 138 miles is

just a nice distance, and the hotels are excellent. Sixty-one miles farther on comes Tours, a place one must see if one has never seen it before, but the highway each side of it is dull, if a road that lets the car move as fast as one wants can be considered unattractive.

South of Tours our way is on the famous Paris-Bordeaux road and one does not stop for amusement; it is surprising how the *kilomètre* stones flash by, and often one can see for at least six miles ahead. Yet one should not take too much for granted; if the day be cold the heads of the drivers of the slow carts on the road are invariably muffled up, and, as their pace is not your pace, it is surprising how slow they seem in getting out of one's way. Still, one can move along through Châtellerault to Poitiers, and even here, in a town perhaps as full of ancient and mediæval history as any other in France, one feels inclined to cut the cackle and get on with the horse-power. But one should visit Poitiers and

86 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

solemnly do its sights, for the town marks the high-water mark of the Moors in Europe, and between here and Tours incredible numbers of dead Saracens—



If the day be cold the heads of the drivers
of the slow carts are invariably muffled up.

even in comparison with the late slaughter among civilised nations—were counted dead by historians not quite so likely to be corrected as our modern journalists.

We, also, did something at Poitiers in a gentlemanly combat with its present owners, and I suppose as schoolboys once learnt about it all.

Just south of Poitiers—by way of drawing a moral and depressing the speed-merchant—there is a slight bend in an ineffably fast, direct, wide, white road. Slight as it is, one feels quite a wrench as the wheels move to take it, and, just beyond it, there is a white stone pillar, a monument put up to poor Marcel Renault, who, in the historic Paris-Madrid race in 1903, failed for once to corner properly and met his death against one of the trees that line the long road. The sight of it sobers one down, but it also makes one reflect that, in the event of a similar *contretemps* occurring to another heedless, hurrying motorist, he and his car would come across something a little harder than the tree that killed the great pioneer. I am of opinion that the memorial would perhaps have been just as effective a little farther back. How-

88 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

ever, there it is, and no doubt it contrives to serve a double purpose.

From Le Mans to Angoulême is in the neighbourhood of some 200 miles, and the two days' run from Le Havre



Here, on a Good Friday, once I actually got meat for dinner.

takes one clean away from the kind of France most of us know too well to a country which is quite southern in many of its aspects. At Angoulême there is another excellent hotel, though not a typically provincial hostelry of France, because it is the house of call and rest



TROGLODYTES.

for nearly all the big cars travelling from Paris. But it is very comfortable, and one always looks for rest after the first two days out. Here, on a Good Friday, I once got meat for dinner, which goes to show how used it is to catering for sinners.

The proper route south from here lies, as I have remarked, in keeping on the Paris-Bordeaux route (R. N. 10) and making hay while the sun shines. But we will turn aside and see a little more of the country. We may go to Périgueux and see the great cathedral and eat Périgord pies, or we may take the interesting road to Bergerac and have some seventy miles of change from international highways. Bergerac we went to in the last chapter, and also thence to Agen, but there is another good road via Marmande, where one crosses the wide Garonne and comes to Biarritz via Mont-de-Marsan and Dax. All quite easy and all very pleasant.

But perhaps, if one is touring and

not merely *en route* for Biarritz, Pau, or St. Jean-de-Luz, it is wiser to travel across the little hills of the wine country and see charming places such as Ville-neuve-sur-Lot. For one thing, one has



One has the road all to oneself,

the road to oneself, for other motors and motorists are rare, and the main line feeling one acquires on big roads is entirely absent. Agen is a good stopping-place, and the road south-west of it through Nérac is very attractive and picturesque. If Pau is our destination—

though it is not a place much frequented by motor tourists—we part company with the Biarritz folk at Condom and strike south, although there is no reason why one should not get to Biarritz *via* Pau



Quaint little villages near the Mediterranean

and thus see more of the country and a good deal more of the high white Pyrenees to the south of it.

At Mont-de-Marsan one picks up high roads and advertisements again, but before that it is just as well to turn off at

92 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

Nérac and come by way of Durance through a land which is entirely different to any other I have ever been through. To begin with, it is mostly forest, and just such a forest that real fairy-story wood-cutters live in. (Perhaps they have cut it down for war purposes since I was there, but I doubt it.) Then there are odd little villages every ten miles or so and heavy-tiled farmhouses, each with quaint hen-roosts high up in the tree-tops. There is gorse, there is heather, there is Mediterranean heath, and always pine trees and little lagoons. Perhaps more birds than usual, for one sunny March day we saw swallows and heard the cuckoo as we lunched on a dry, grassy bank with nobody apparently near us for miles and miles. This is the country of the Landes ; once, we are told, all sand dunes and stilts and waste, but now for hundreds of miles a prosperous and paying forest for the enterprising Government that risked the experiment. Where the Landes begins and ends I know not ; nor do I think

does anyone else, except the Forest Authorities themselves.

So to Biarritz by way of Dax and Bayonne, the latter a most charming town of quite a different stamp to its neigh-



The Germans preferred
the Riviera.

bour. But I like Biarritz, although it is so English ; one of its charms used to be that the German preferred the Riviera and Italy and so annoyed us little by his

94 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE
presence, even in the days before the
war.

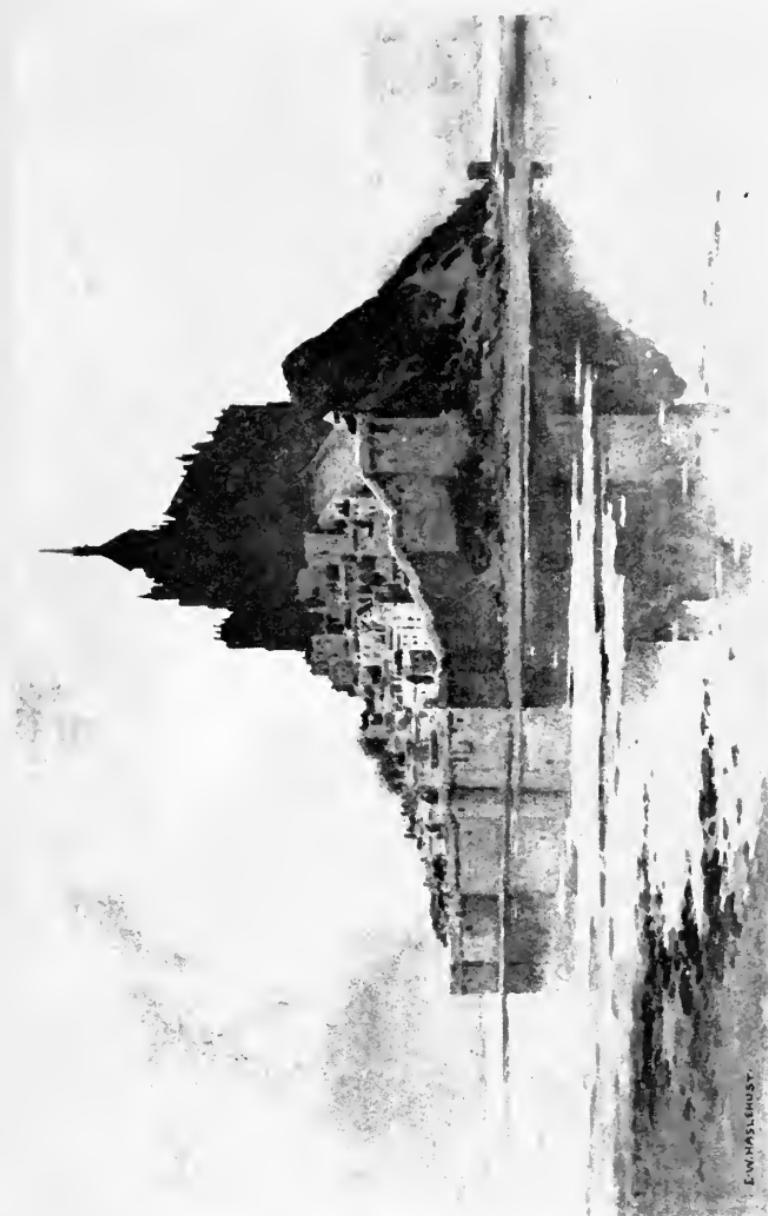
But at Biarritz one wants best clothes,



There is also golf.

and this is not a book about what to do
when the car is idle. Still, it can be
very pleasant—and the sea is glorious.
There is also golf.

*Let us go hence. I know a forest, deep
With glimmering ghost-trees as the silver birch
Slide past. Amid a noon that seems asleep
Our following dust doth seem to all besmirch.
Here 'mid the gloom that filters through the green
The gods of other days may yet be seen.*



MONT-SAINT-MICHEL.

E. W. HASTHORPE

CHAPTER VIII

FROM ST. MALO TO BIARRITZ VIA RENNES,
NANTES, LA ROCHELLE, SAINTES AND
BORDEAUX

THIS is a tour that properly begins at St. Malo, a town to see on its own account, and one that used to be reached—and probably will again—three days a week by very excellent steamers from Southampton. Or one may come to Cherbourg and pick up the road, through Granville and Avranches, taking Mont St. Michel on the way.

Mont St. Michel is a monument that, except Carcassonne, has not its equal in the world ; it is one of few things that is even better than the most vivid imagination can paint. It is very handy for St. Malo ; indeed, if one takes this jaunt homewards it sets a seal on an otherwise interesting but not particularly exciting journey.

The first part of the run is a direct cut across Brittany; not the wildest and most uncouth part of that desirable Devon-like province, but still quite unlike a great deal of the rest of France and much more like Ireland, except for one or two reasons to its advantage. One could imagine hounds and hunting in Brittany, and the more solid houses and big stone churches seem to fit better its stouter and more stolid inhabitants. Here one comes across many religious processions in the streets, and the very priests seem more numerous and walk about more as if their parishes belonged to them than they do elsewhere.

It is a good road and a cheerfully variegated one all the way to Rennes—an odd collection of styles, with some streets that look as if they had been left alone for centuries—and on to Nantes, a matter of about 115 miles.

Nantes is a large and important city, built, as it seems when one is crossing the big Loire, on innumerable rivers and



The priests are more numerous and walk about as if their parishes belonged to them.

100 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

possessing all sorts of castles and beautiful buildings to visit.

I hear it is a little altered here and there by the war and by the coming in of the United States, but I expect the



The peasants are just as curious and interesting as ever.

country all around is just the same, and the peasantry that use the railways that share most of the *Route Nationale* for scores of miles are just as curious and as interesting as ever. There are plenty of good hotels ; I remember we patronised

ST. MALO TO BORDEAUX 101

a commercial one because we happened to be near it and it had a garage as part of it. It did us well and cheaply ; in those days there was always plenty to



Nantes. It has been a little altered here and there by the war and by the coming in of the U.S.A.

eat everywhere, and by now I expect the times of dearth are pretty well over all along France's western shore.

The road from St. Malo to Bordeaux is all one, *Route Nationale 137*, and very

excellent it is—or was. There is a friendliness in *kilomètre* stones marked with the beginning and the ending of a journey, and it helps to keep one on the right track all the way. After Nantes one gets on higher ground, but only comparatively ; here, I believe, there is very little fear of getting snowed up for long at any time of the year, a contingency which cannot be entirely omitted on any other tour from the north to the south.

But nearer La Rochelle, and on the other side of it, one comes along through salt marshes, very like the flats at the back of Great Yarmouth, especially on a bright blue day with fat white clouds and a whistling west wind.

La Rochelle—another town, I understand, that has been quite busy of late—is a delightful place, full of a mixture of old and new with the former predominating. It makes a good centre for interesting excursions, as does Nantes, which, I should have added to my remarks on it, gives ample opportunities of visiting



THE HARBOUR MOUTH, LA ROCHELLE.

and inspecting the famous *châteaux* all along the Loire. But that is a trip in itself, and one that, if needs be, can be done without a car. Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Williamson are the authorities on how to enjoy and understand that country, and I leave it to them. We are just travellers, not sojourners—at any rate, early in the year and with all the south before us.

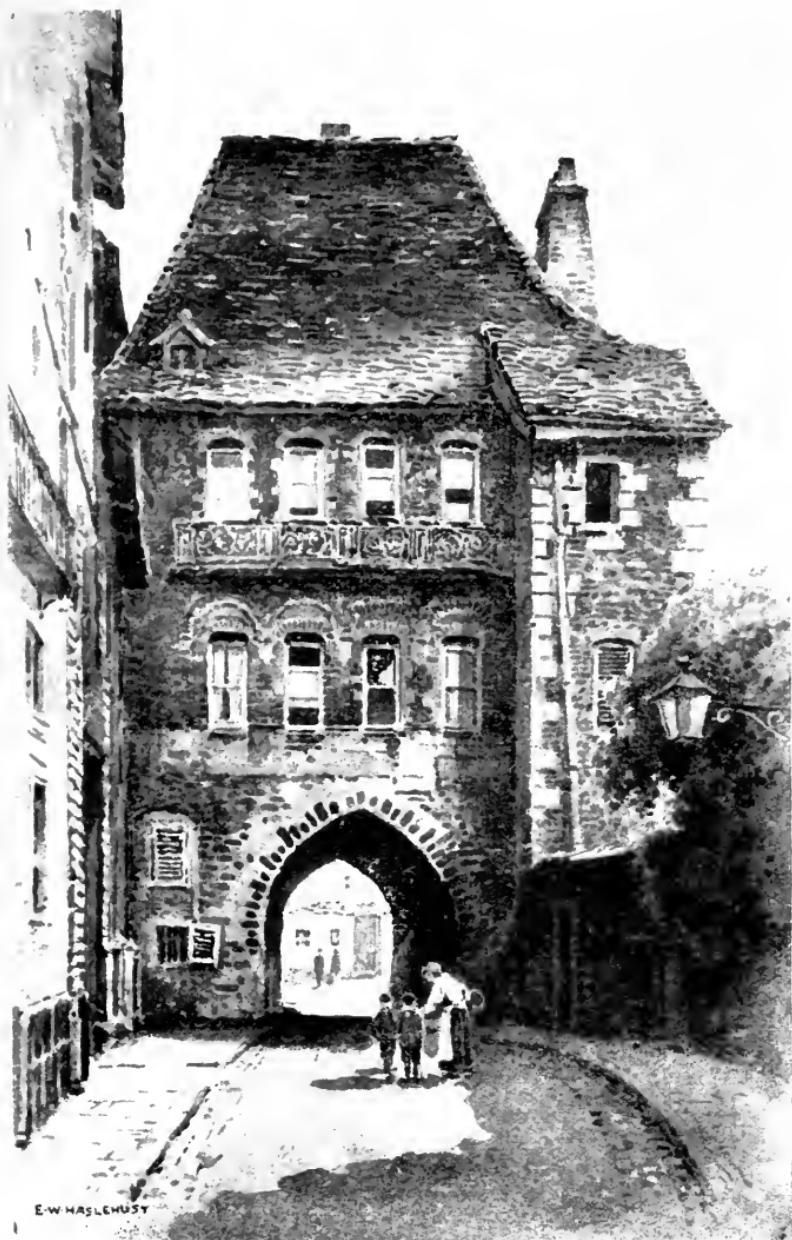
After La Rochelle comes Rochefort, a quiet old town in a backwater of life. Once upon a time it was a big proposition on its own, but nowadays ships leave it out because they are too big, and it is too far from deep water. But it has plenty of interesting and picturesque bits, and in the summer they tell me the coast villages and towns around it are most popular, especially for sea-bathing.

Beyond Rochefort one gets on high ground again on each side of Saintes, a dear little town with one hotel that once represented to me the high-water mark in French hotel cookery. Perhaps

the fact that the landlord was his own *chef* had a good deal to do with it ; the only drawback we found was that his *salle-à-manger* was much too popular with the townsfolk.

Saintes has more solid attractions as well. A real Roman arch still in use, not at all unlike one by the tomb of Scipio, near Tarragona in Spain, with many other ruins and adaptions.

After Saintes, having dropped on to lower ground, we come to the Bordeaux wine country *par excellence*, for Cognac itself is close by, and, like the plain of Burgundy in Central France, almost every town either bears the name of a well-known vintage or sounds as if it ought to. Even Cadillac here more suggests liquor than a Yankee automobile, while the agriculture of the whole district is nothing but preparation for drink—an excellent reason why the prosperity of France is never very likely to go hand in hand with the spread of teetotalism in this part of the world.



MORTAGNE, PORTAIL-ST.-DENIS.

Then across the big Gironde and into huge and thriving Bordeaux itself, a town that occasionally has taken on the *rôle* of Paris until possible disasters in that direction were past.

Bordeaux is too big for this light work ; let us pass on and through.

From it one can go to Biarritz by Arcachon and along the twisting shore road to Belin towards Dax, by a straight, flat track through the pine woods, or by Bazas to Mont-de-Marsan. This last is the popular route, but the road—when last I went along it—was bumpy and in bad condition, while the more direct route—via Belin and Labouheyre—is not nearly so black as it is imagined, because there the much-dreaded *pavé* is really quite harmless, and very often for miles together one can drive with one wheel on quite good metal and get no jolting at all. There are two kinds of *pavé*, and the *pavé* of the south is a skating rink compared to the petrified kidneys of the north and Belgium, not excluding

many of the side roads around Paris itself.

There is some talk of constructing a great main, straight, real motor road all along the shore between Arcachon and Biarritz, and I hope it will come off. But it will not be interesting ; it will only be a sort of glorified race track, and as such only useful for those who want to get to the end of their journey as quickly as they can. These folk had much better use the railway ; there are plenty of good express trains.

*Let us go hence. I know a road that winds
Up from the pine-belt to the naked land,
Shrouded with snow-slides, where the steersman finds
A yawning death agape on either hand.
Steady and slow ! O crawl around each bend
Till they are done. All things must have an end.*

CHAPTER IX

ALONG UNDER THE PYRENEES

I HAVE now described six different roads from the north to the south, but for the motorist who hates going over the same ground twice there are any number of others between them, each presenting new experience and fresh variety of scenery. But these six are sufficient for my purpose, which is to show how pleasant and simple a thing it is to get from one end of the country to the other and always to be finding out something new and something good. Besides it is so very improving for one's geography and general sense of proportion. Until one crosses France in a car one cannot realise how big and glorious a land it is, and what beauties it conceals in its vast and practically unadvertised interior.

110 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

Our next course lies almost due west to east, an up-and-down journey over the northern roots of the Pyrenees, very often between the foothills and the mountains. There are books that go into this fascinating country in detail; my friend Mr. C. L. Freeston has written the standard work on motor mountaineering in this district, and Mr. Hilaire Belloc has told all about the delights of clambering and climbing in the parts where no cars can go and no motorists would care to take them. Therefore I will content myself with but a brief outline of the usual road or roads, commenting occasionally on what there is to be seen and done *en route*.

As a matter of fact there are two distinct roads, the one, a big, fine one from Bayonne through Orthez, Pau, Tarbes, St. Gaudens, St. Girons, Foix, and Quillan to Perpignan, and the other a more hilly one and not a real route at all.

But the latter is by far the more

interesting, for the reason that very often it does a bit of mountaineering on its own, and out of it run the direct roads into the hearts of the Pyrenees, although, as a rule, having visited such places as St. Jean, Argelès, Bagnères-de-Bigorre, Gavarnie, and Bagnères-de-Luchon, one is forced to return by the same pass by which one came to it.

But there are side roads that occasionally join up two passes, and, if the season is late enough, one can leave the car and go on foot or on horseback up into the mountains and as far as the eternal snow will allow.

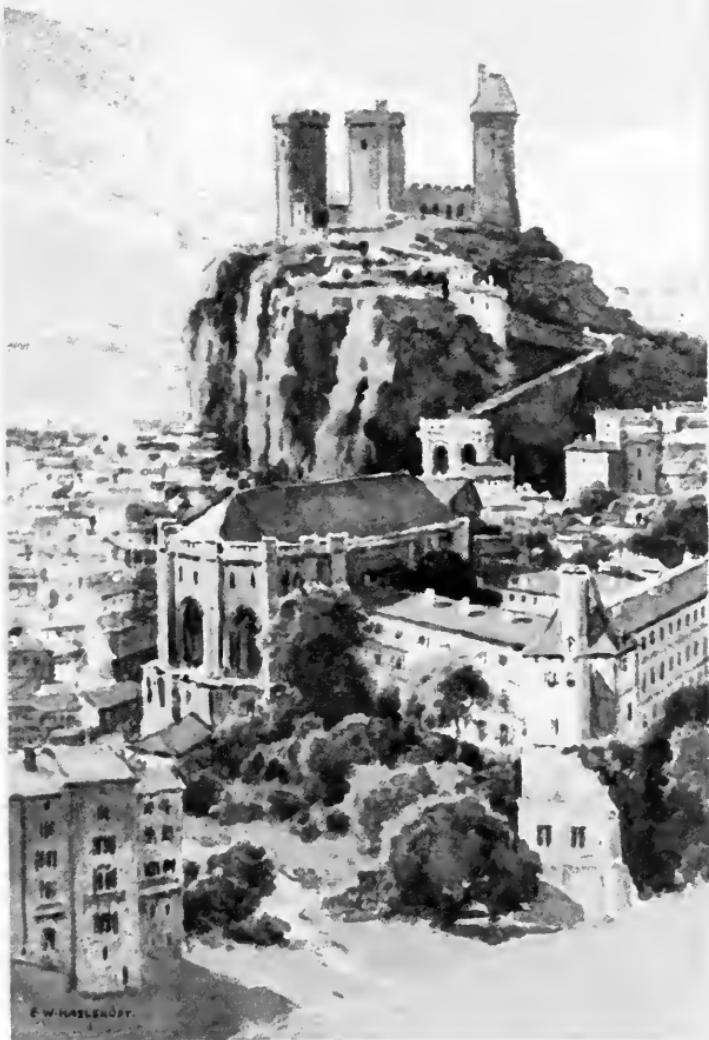
There are some wonderful places to see, and the Alps themselves present no finer masses of tumbled, ragged white peaks than can be found within a few hours' walk of quite respectable roads. There are lakes—dark, gloomy tarns of mystery—black, endless forests, green *plateaux* where one looks instinctively for tinkling cows and merry peasants, rushing romantic torrents, gloomy gorges,

112 TOWARDS THE SUNSHINE

ruins of feudal castles, sword-cleft passes, terrific ravines and waterfalls a thousand feet sheer falling from over snow-topped cliffs.

And, on the other side of the mountains, lies Spain, still the country of more mystery than any other save Tibet or Far Peru. The Pyrenees present a more or less level wall on the French side; on the other, they stretch far into Spain, and few men know all the parts of those wild lands. They say the ordinary Spaniard takes very little interest in them, and I can well believe it.

Perhaps the principal advantage of the lower route, the easy highway (R. N. 117), lies in the fact that all along it one has the matchless panorama of the mountains ever in sight, with the peaks detached and recognisable in addition to the enchantment that distance is said to lend to the view. Also, the towns that lie along it have good hotels and are in themselves invariably well worth inspecting and visiting. Their climate is



FOIX.

good and as windless as any in Europe, although I must confess that I have experienced heavier rain at times on this road than anywhere else in France. However, it is not eternal; as a rule a wet



The ordinary Spaniard takes very little interest in them (tourists).

day is followed by a dry one, a happy custom which our own country seldom sees fit to follow.

Towards Foix—and a more truly picturesque town does not exist—the lower road gets hilly and the whole aspect of

the country seems to alter ; but after Quillan and its wonderful gorge one comes down again, and almost imperceptibly the true Mediterranean littoral begins. The trees change their kinds and the natives their garments ; there are bamboos and camellias and cork-trees and umbrella pines, white oxen, Italian-looking water-jars and fountains ; the women are darker, and the men keep up their trousers with brighter-coloured sashes. One has arrived, and Perpignan and Villefranche—between that town and Mont Louis, and so off the main road—are much more like Spain than one could imagine, unless one realises that a few centuries or less ago they themselves were never quite sure to which country they temporarily belonged.

I do not pretend to give a succinct and detailed account of this very pleasant and comparatively unknown tour. The books I have mentioned and many others tell in detail all about the roads and their surroundings, and they must be read

and carried in order to lose nothing of interest. But if I have contrived to interest and to persuade motorists, who



The men kept up their trousers
with brighter-coloured sashes.

want to see the world and our good Ally France in particular, to take this trip I shall be well rewarded, for I am sure they will thank me for putting them on

the track of such a charming and original touring-ground.

Here one seems very far from home and all its troubles and worries, and if variety is the soul of enjoyment, one has it to the full, for nowhere else, in the compass of two hundred miles or so, can one experience such a variety of changes and alteration, unless it be on the road between the Riviera and Grenoble across the Alpes Maritimes.

But that is everybody's land ; this, as yet, is a country one can have almost to oneself.

But to enjoy it properly one wants a good car and a fairly powerful one, especially when one goes exploring on one's own away in the mountains. For instance, once upon a time, and when they were not half as good as they are now, if our Daimler had not been capable of pushing snow-drifts in front of her as though they were mere froth, I think we should have had to spend many hours of an early spring up to our necks in their icy interiors.

*Let us go hence. I know a path, knee-deep
In soft brown dust, that runs through orchards black
Blazing with luscious oranges that heap
Themselves in red-gold regiments, and lack
Only the sheen of spears and flags unfurled
To make one dream it is another world.*

CHAPTER X

A DIVERSION INTO EASTERN SPAIN

I REFUSE to confine this work to France and its roads ; this chapter is on a very pleasant excursion of quite respectable length from Perpignan into Spain as far south as Valeneia.

We did the tour in a Daimler, and if our tyres had been as stout as our car we might have got farther still. But no tyres could have stood those Spanish roads ; if they—the roads—are not better now I take no blame for anything that may happen to anyone who may desire to follow in our halting tracks.

At the same time I hear there is an improvement ; certainly, it is not likely that the bold sportsmen of Barcelona are content still to motor over jagged stones that must make their tyre bills enormous. When I am assured that there

is an alteration for the better, I am going there again, if for no other reason than to travel along a seaboard that has a climate which in February can be like a traditional English May, where all sorts of flowers bloom, and where the proof of its balminess lies in the fact that, as a rule, the inhabitants do not trouble to put glass in their window-frames. That is, I suppose, unless they can afford to.

One starts from Perpignan, full of *essence* and information supplied by M. Siné, the owner of the big Perpignan garage, a charming gentleman whose only fault we found to be a trifle too much optimism in his language. But that we soon learnt was merely Spanish politeness.

Some twenty miles north is Le Perthus, a modest pass through the Pyrenees where Spain and France meet in the middle of it. Here one goes through the proper Customs formalities—I believe lately these have been modified and most of the worries and payments we experienced have

been done away with, that is, if one intends to return within a certain specified time. But these details can be ascertained later. Even with the former troubles the journey is well worth them, and one's money comes back in the end.



Merely Spanish
politeness.

The road was very good to Le Perthus when we traversed it; it was very bad afterwards. But, as I do not know in the least how it is to-day, for the future I shall be silent as to surface, and merely discuss scenery and surroundings. Another twenty miles of what is called "romantic"

scenery diversified by dogs—the Spanish dogs were awful (probably they are all run over by this time; at any rate, as I hope they are, I will not refer to them again also)—we came by the picturesque town of Figueras to Gerona, where we abode. Gerona is vastly interesting and dark and gloomy; as a first experience of a Spanish town it is excellent, because of the impression it gives of an entirely antique order of things.

From Gerona to Barcelona is but eighty miles; the circumstances I have referred to above, in addition to the absence of bridges and the presence of floods at the fords, made us, in 1907, take a couple of days over the little jaunt.

But everything is novel, including the manners of the natives. They tell me the Catalan is by no means a good representative of the usual Spaniard, and my experience agrees with the explanation.

Barcelona is a beautiful town and a pleasure to abide in. The roads thither

were not nearly so agreeable. The motorist would do well to spend a few days in Barcelona ; the inhabitants seem to cater for all tastes, and in many respects it is very highly civilised indeed.

But loitering in cities is not motor-ing, and this is a motoring excursion. The next important place along the sea front is Tarragona, the town where what they call “ poor man’s ” port comes from, and the huge Bodegas by the harbour are full of it. Of course, it also keeps other and more respectable vintages ; indeed, in every little village and town one comes across quite new and interesting bever-ages, though not always exactly to the British taste. Tarragona is also very interesting and extremely picturesque, and as it is only some sixty miles from Barce-lona, one (with luck) can get there early and see all the sights around after luncheon.

Then comes Tortosa, a little way up the big river Ebro, and this is truly prim-i-tive and original, even to possessing in

its neighbourhood respectable roads. The peasantry are all real gentlemen, and, when we stopped for reasons referred to before, invariably insisted on taking wine



The peasants are all real
gentlemen.

with us—theirs or ours, it mattered not, I preferred ours—the taste of an uncertain liquid out of an indubitable goatskin flask is a good deal a matter of luck.

Except for a hideous iron bridge, Tortosa is truly mediæval. The streets are narrower than usual, which means a good deal for Spain. The inhabitants drink



The inhabitants drink their wine out of a decanter; that is to say, they squirt it into their mouths from a distance.

their wine out of the decanter; that is to say, they squirt it into their mouths from a distance, a habit which is best practised with nothing on by beginners. Petrol in those days lived in five-gallon

drums, and they fed our tanks as they drank their wine. Which was clever, had it not been for the universal habit of cigarette smoking. However, we lived.

South of Tortosa is the land of oranges in bulk. Oranges everywhere ; the trees ablaze with them, and the ground golden with their glory. Such masses were new to me, and I revelled in their colour ; even in Sicily one sees nothing like them, for there they seem to grow wild, while in this part of Spain they were more in the nature of an intensive crop.

The next towns of importance are Castellon and Villareal, both very Moorish-looking in their buildings and in their settings. Farther on comes Sagunto, well known to schoolboys in connection with Hannibal, and a very charming town too. His methods of besieging cities compare favourably with modern ideas on the same subject. It is still—or was in 1907—defended by a bridgeless river, not but that there was not quite a definite bridge marked on our map.

But Spanish maps are more optimistic than entirely useful.

Valeneia, a big, important and beautiful town, comes very soon if one is lucky, and it makes an excellent place



Spanish Maps are more often optimistic than entirely useful.

to stop. Had we known better in 1907 it would also have made a very good end to our expedition. As it is, knowing nothing as to any recent modern road improvements farther south in this part of Spain, I refuse to write any further as to the roads to the south. We cer-

tainly did go beyond, but it was all pain and grief, and other pioneers have told me they cordially agree with my sentiments as then expressed.

But at all events, do not—in the winter, at least—turn inland to look for enjoyment or better roads; for one thing, it knows how to be cold on the mountains; and, for another, driving on the usual surfaces is pure torture to anyone who is fond of his tyres and wants them again later on.

Therefore, I give a limit of three hundred miles to this tour, and would much like to hear the latest reports, both on the highways we traversed and those beyond Jativa that we surrendered to.

But the climate is everything—in the spring. And a nice warm, genial sunny climate is what we are all looking for with our cars at that time of the year. There frost and snow seemed a thousand miles away, and one blushed even to handle leather-lined fur coats and all the horrid paraphernalia of winter motoring.

I have no reason to suppose that we were particularly lucky in the weather we found ; anyhow, we had it fine, and so it is up to future motorists to risk it and get the luck we enjoyed.



In the matter of food we did very well. Some of the viands were not particularly delicate, and some of the sauces a trifle on the strong side.

In the matter of food we did well also. I am quite aware that some of the viands were not particularly delicate, and that some of the sauces were a trifle on the strong side. But when one is in Rome, etc. ; and, after all, I felt ill only once, and then I recovered marvellously quickly.

The hotels were fair and decidedly interesting ; perhaps some of us to-day look on the creeping horrors we used to know only by repute once as nothing out of the ordinary. Certainly they did not trouble us ; our rooms were invariably quite comfortable, and the beds most inviting.

Undoubtedly this trip is an interlude that should be taken by motorists out for new experiences, and I go so far as to say that, given good roads, this seaboard could easily become the most popular early spring touring-ground of all the countries I have travelled in. Perhaps one can best compare it—except for the roads—with the country by the sea in Algeria, while by reason of its size it puts delightful Sicily miles behind it.

Good roads are the secret of popularity with motorists where the climatic conditions are what one desires. Here one has the climate ; roads are merely a matter of taking the trouble of making them.

*Let us go hence. I know a wide lagoon
Rush-fringed, that stretches leagues along the land,
Peopling the dark beneath the empty moon
With long-lost cities sunk below the sand.
And where the night wind whispers off the sea
That as the past is, shall the present be.*

* * * *

*Let us go hence. I know a garden quaint
That bathes its terraced feet in bluest sea,
A blue that artists hardly dare to paint
Because they know such things should never be.
(For what an English critic does not know
Must be absurd. Though really it is so.)*

CHAPTER XI

BORDEAUX TO THE RIVIERA ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORE

UNDOUBTEDLY this is the pleasantest route of all routes to the South. It is no more expensive—counting by days out—it saves time and tyres, and it obviates very possible discomforts in running long distances over occasionally uninteresting roads, especially at a time of the year when one does not go motoring for pure pleasure and nothing else.

Good steamers carry cars and passengers from London Bridge to Bordeaux, and I believe that from Liverpool also vessels that carry motors to the same town are to be found. But London is good enough for me; the car that leaves it on Saturday midday will be found waiting on the quay the next Tuesday morning. Its passengers may come with

it if they like. If they prefer a few more days at home, a short Channel crossing and a ten-hour run from Paris to Bordeaux, I am in their company, and, having arrived, there is a pleasant feeling of having to some extent cheated the climate and got well ahead of the usual season of the year.

For Bordeaux in March can be very warm. Very seldom, indeed, I believe, does it suffer much from snow and frost, and though one may easily find these again inland on the slightly higher ground by Montauban, yet one is fairly safe to be dry, especially if the bright and glorious sun happens to be accompanied by that hardy wind known in the valley of the Rhone as the *Mistral*. Therefore the traveller will be wise to wear plenty of clothing—or, rather, not to leave his thick coat behind because of any idea that there is no such thing as chilliness in the south of France.

The road from Bordeaux to Montauban (137 miles) begins badly, but soon im-



FOR THE THIRSTY NORTH.

ENVIRONMENT

proves. Then one can move, although the local traffic is often fairly dense and



Bordeaux can be terribly hot in March.

the condition of the surfacee nothing to enthuse about. The big Garonne river keeps company more or less with the

road for most of the way, and the presence of high mountains on each side in the distance makes every mile of it more or less picturesque. We cut across



Grown-ups will enjoy the study of the big wine-list.

former routes at Agen as we run southeast, and then for a while our own road becomes quite an up-and-down affair, but nothing to a good car; the change from the flat is quite inspiring.

Montauban has good hotels, is interest-



THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE.

ing, and has some delightful views. It makes a good first night's halt, especially if one happens to have among one's passengers lucky folk who have not toured France before. They will enjoy the new experience of dining at a good provincial hotel, and really grown-ups will enjoy equally the study of the big wine-list. Next morning one leaves for Toulouse, and here is another town of good cooking with much to see and admire.

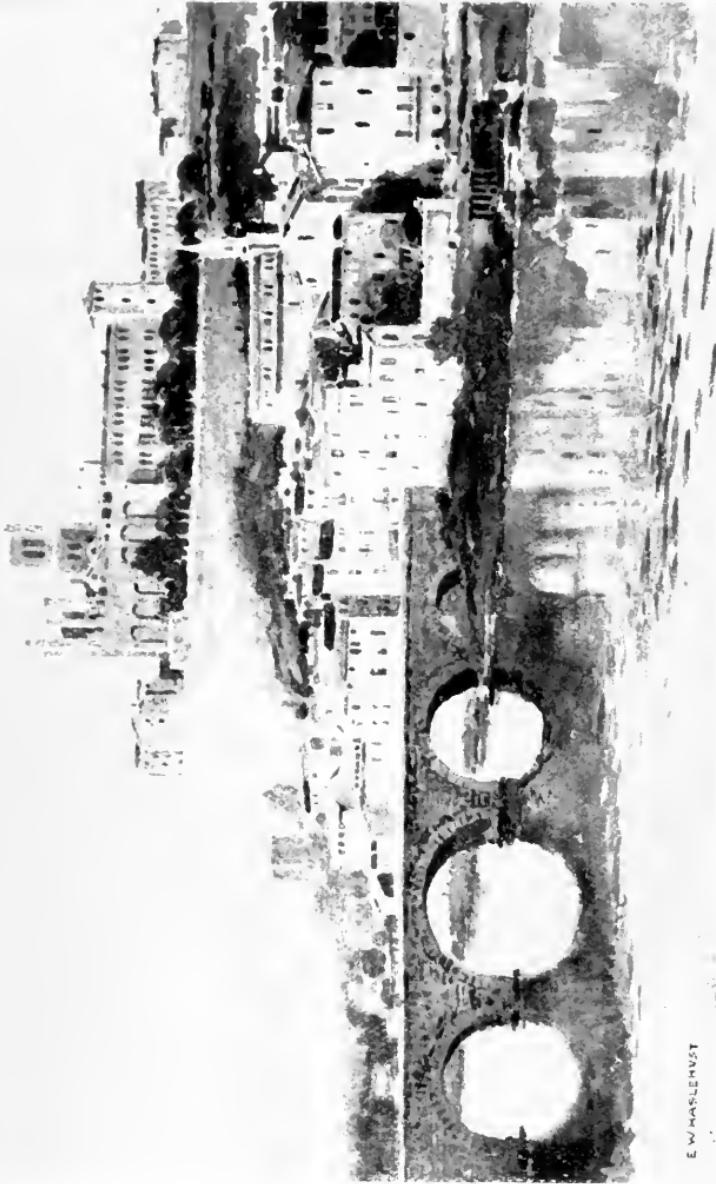
After Toulouse comes Castelnau-dary and Carcassonne, a very wonder of the world, and a place one must visit and inspect afresh every time one passes near it.

I have tried to sing its praises in an earlier chapter, and I must not repeat myself other than beyond once more giving my opinion as to its unquity—to coin a word to fit it.

From Carcassonne to Narbonne is not a first-class road, but it is far better than the road to Béziers by Homps. Of course, one can go *via* Quillan by the gorge to Perpignan and pick up the coast

close to the Spanish frontier, and, if time is no particular object, this is what I recommend. Perpignan itself is well worth seeing ; one can loaf on the sands at Canet—and begin the season for that watering-place—or one can take the train to Port-bou and walk over the hill and into Spain and back again just for the sake of adding another country to one's logbook. Therefore I will begin this coast trip at Perpignan.

The view behind one all the way to Béziers can be entrancing. The whole of the eastern range of the Pyrenees fills the southern horizon, and on a fine day its snow-clad rows of peaks seem high white things almost remote and unconnected with the rest of the earth. Beneath are flat fields and dark groves and all the business of everyday native life ; then comes a hazy gap, as it were, and above are these glistening miracles. Drivers should stop to admire ; one cannot trust anyone to take his eyes off such beauty for long together.



BÉZIERS.

E. W. HASLEHUST

So to Narbonne, a very old, quaint, and disordered mixture of things ancient and modern, famous for its honey, now and in the days of the Romans, and the scene of one of the worst wine-riots—I forget what it was all about—some dozen years ago.

Then on another twenty miles or so to Béziers, another picturesque town with as good a view to the north of the Cévennes as to the far south of the Pyrenees. One takes photographs at Béziers and passes on; there is not much to stay for, unless it happens to be lunch time.

A quaint little townlet called Agdé is interesting to see, and there once I remember being given a dinner consisting of coot and saw-beaked mackerels—at least, that is what the *loups-de-mer* looked like. Also many other odd things. I remember that I felt very ill the next day. However, we escaped *bouillabaise*, and that is a very difficult thing to do in these parts for long together. Just

beyond, only across a wide lagoon, lies Cette, a very important seaport always, and lately a good deal more important than ever.



One takes photographs at Béziers.

Cette has a dusty, roundabout approach, but is something like Venice when one arrives ; perhaps the best way to see it is to leave the car at Méze, on the main road, and take the little steamer across

the Étang and land in the very middle of its main street.

Cette has good hotels, also a miniature mountain of its own, from the top of which it is very pleasant to gaze around and note the wide sandbank that the stormy Golfe du Lion has thrown up to protect the coast and annoy its dwellers all along the shore at intervals, even almost to Marseilles itself. The sea can be very blue here, and one may note for the first time the ordinary shapes of the sails of the fishing-boats.

From Cette to Montpellier the road is good but very full of traffic, mostly wine-carts. If it is dry and windy there will also be dust, but that matters very little if one is properly clothed and guarded against it. Anyhow, it is better than rain. Montpellier is a charming town ; its inhabitants like to call it "Little Paris," and one can read all about it and several of its neighbours in Mr. W. J. Loeke's delightful tales of "The Adventures of Aristide Pujol."

I am in a quandary here as to whether I am writing for people whose only idea is the getting to Cannes, or for pleasant folk who want to see all that there is to be seen.

I will endeavour to cater for the latter



We intellectual ones prefer to loaf.

class ; for the former, my adviee is to make as direct as they can for Arles, run the car at ninety miles an hour to Salon, pick up the usual Boulogne-Monte Carlo route at Aix, and go as fast as they can along the ordinary road to Fréjus and the Riviera.

We intellectual ones prefer to loaf.



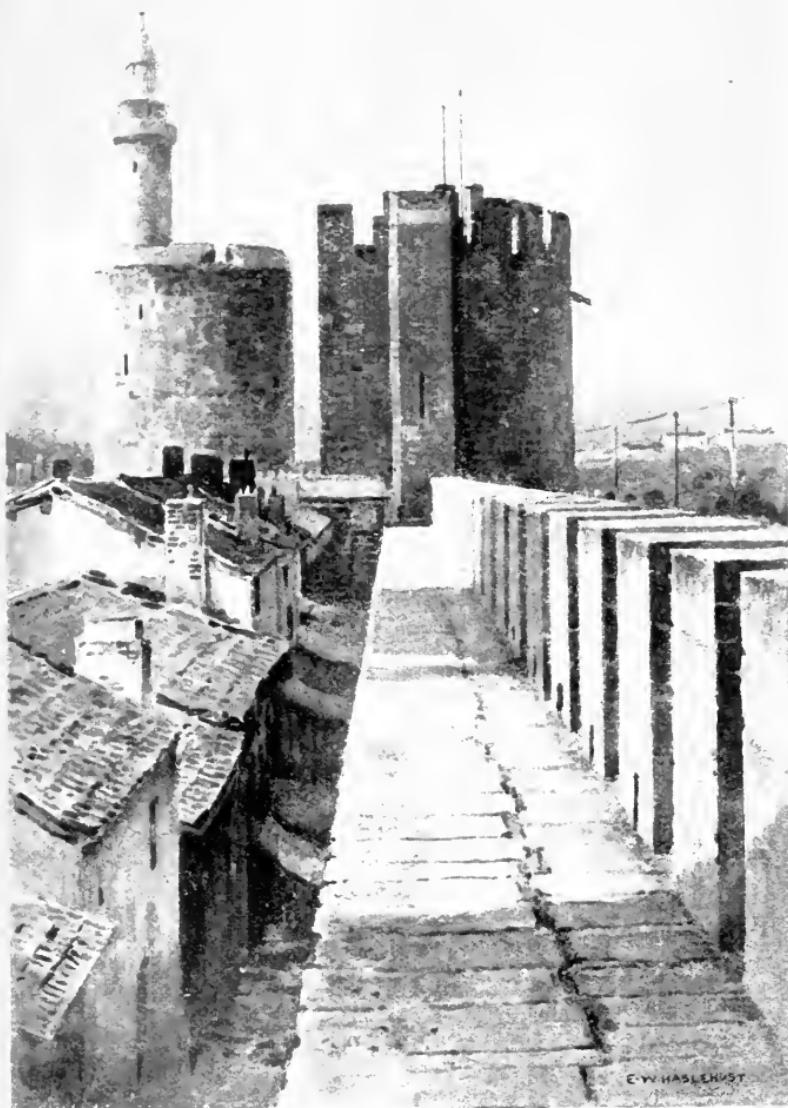
NÎMES, LA MAISON CARRÉE.

Very well, then. From Montpellier we will follow the scorcher to Lunel and turn off sharp down a poor road to Aigues Mortes and see a very curious remnant indeed.

Aigues Mortes, they say, once was a thriving place, now it is but "a port of stranded pride," and miles away from a navigable sea. But its walls are there and four square, with many solemn towers, they stand still as grim and imposing as ever, while inside them is the odd little half-forgotten, thrown-together town. I have stayed at the hotel and it is quite pleasant, but when one has seen the walls and the towers one may just as well get on. Therefore, retracing our steps to Lunel, we come to Nîmes, and there is nothing new I can hope to tell you about this wonderful place. Its well-advertised ruins speak for themselves, and its would-be guides are often quite a nuisance. Next we will visit Arles, perhaps because of its Greek associations, an even more beautiful town; and it



Nîmes—its would-be guides are often a nuisance.



THE RAMPARTS OF AIGUES-MORTES.

is really extraordinary how the Hellenic type persists in the faces and figures of the modern Arlesiennes to-day. Arles, with Avignon, are places one must see, and while one is in their neighbourhood it would be very foolish to leave out the wonderful rock-hewn old ruined town of Les Baux, about ten miles from the former, and quite unlike every other place one has ever read about.

Once upon a time, in the days of Chivalry and Romance, it must have lived up to both of them, for even to-day one gets quite enthusiastic over what may have happened here in the times when the robber barons ruled or harried all fair Provence from their lofty eyrie—and a very proper designation too.

Here was found the coffin of the Princess Jeanne of the Golden Locks, with all her six feet of yellow hair to prove her identity. It has a good hotel, and six years ago had also a wealth of rats. I once spent an Easter here, and I think it was the most Easterish of

Easters I have ever kept. Everything was *en suite*, and we tried to live up to it. Certainly one must see Les Baux before it becomes too properly appreciated. It is not big enough for crowds.

While in this district one might also



The South—much beloved of artists.

see Tarascon on the Rhone, with as big a prison-house as ever one has read about. Also Saintes-Maries, with its old church among the marshes and its many other remnants of forgotten glories.

From Arles to Salon is nearly twenty-five miles of the fastest roads in all

France. We will begin on it, but within ten miles we will turn south and find Martigues, a most picturesque little town between the sea and the big Étang de



Our Indian troops passing through
Marseilles.

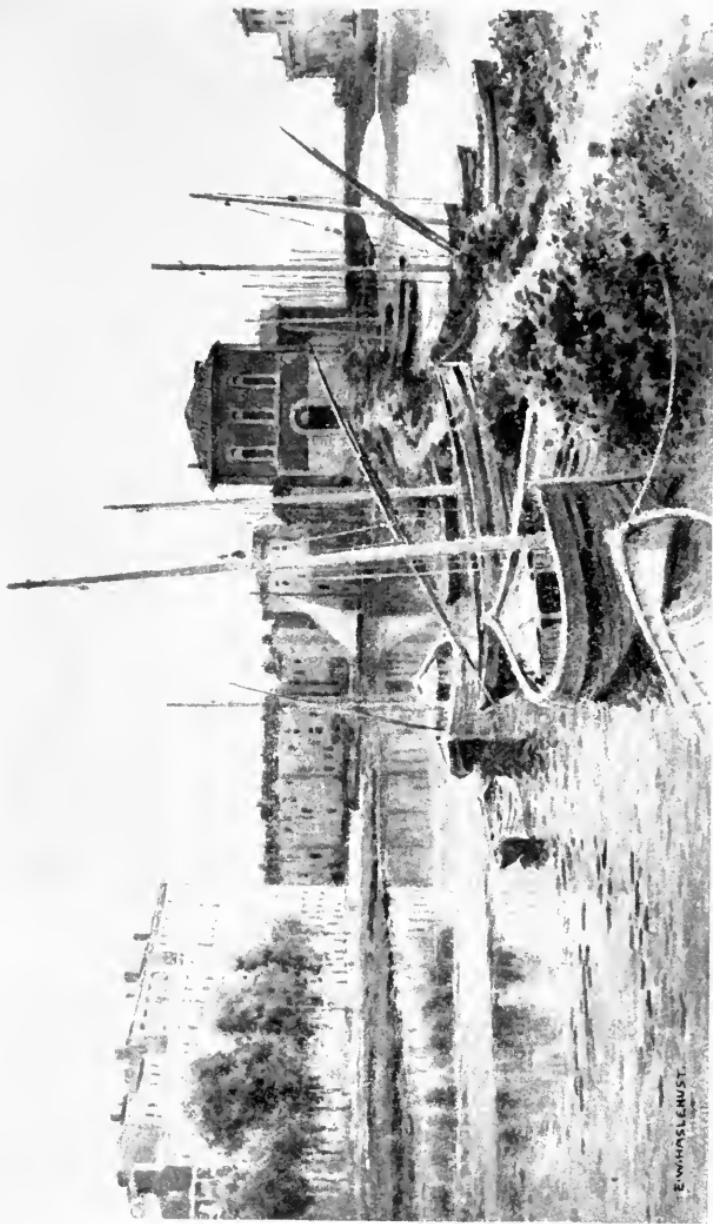
Berre. It is very much beloved of artists, and undoubtedly gives them a wonderful opportunity of employing some of their least-used colours. After which we come to Marseilles, although the last few

miles in are not very wonderful as pleasure roads.

However, Marseilles is a place to be seen and admired ; it is a town I have always been very fond of. I have seen it in many aspects ; perhaps the last time I was there was the oddest, for it was the time when the cream of all the troops of our Indian Empire were passing through and its ordinary Pentecostal population was more diversified than ever.

Marseilles is full of good hotels ; no town has a bigger assortment. Also, it has many sights to see, not the least of which is the famous Cannebière—to my mind quite the noisiest and brightest street in all the world. And so it ought to be ; Marseilles is the world's biggest gateway.

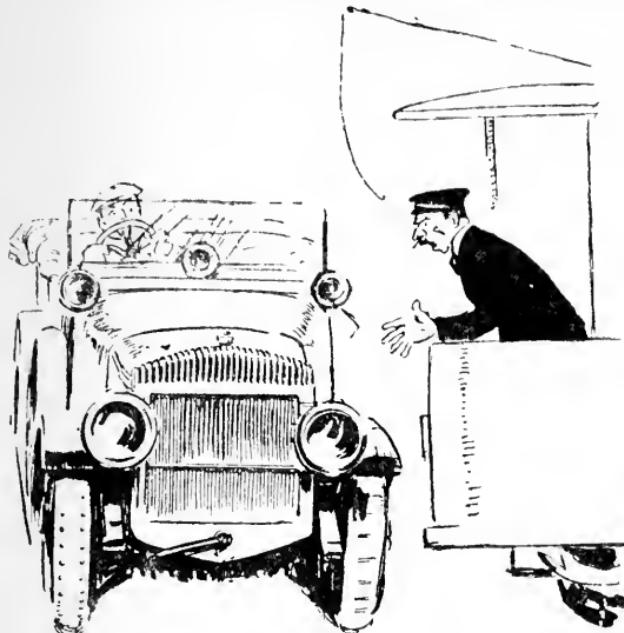
The coast road out of Marseilles begins in slums and goes on as a hill-climb. But, having emerged without coinciding with a tram-car, it becomes very interesting, and there are many odd and beautiful little places to see in the course of



THE HAUNT OF ARTISTS.

its wanderings before it finally drops into Toulon after having sampled every kind of scenery.

Toulon is—or was—a delightful town ;



Having emerged without coinciding with a tram-car.

at present I believe it is so overgrown and was so busy that it is still a trifle out of sorts. Therefore one need not linger long ; Hyères is at hand, and here, for a time, we have ceased to be objects of interest or rarity.

But west of Hyères, until one gets to St. Raphael, one is surprisingly free from other travellers, though, of course, not to the same extent as beyond Marseilles and all along to Bordeaux.

I am a great admirer of this modest portion of the Riviera. It has most of the charms and very few of the drawbacks of the original. Even the wind is more tempered, and, while the sun is not so hot, the evenings are wont to get much less suddenly chilly. Immensely civilised hotels appear at all sorts of likely and unlikely places, but very often one is just as much in foreign parts as anywhere else along the coast behind one.

St. Maxime is an instance of a charming little quiet village with a “fashionable” hotel, while just across a little gulf lies a quite unspoiled tiny seaport called St. Tropez, as far removed from dress clothes and *casinos* as can possibly be imagined. The harbour may smell a bit, but that adds to the illusion; one may loaf here and all around on its red



PEACEFUL SAINT-TROPEZ.

cliffs and in its pine woods without realising all the time that in front of one are strung out all the pearls of the Riviera, white and gleaming in the sunlight under



The Harbour may smell a bit.

dark green hills by the side of the turquoise sea.

St. Tropez is an excellent place to be alone in and to dream, but I expect it, too, will soon get over-civilised.

After St. Tropez comes Fréjus, then either the main highway through the

glorious Esterels—where the mimosa blooms—or the beautiful but highly dangerous “mantelpiece” road between the railway and the edge of the cliff. My advice to those who want to drive along this is to take it from east to west; thuswise one is within one’s rights in cleaving to the inside, especially when the motor-buses come along.

When one finally emerges from either, lo and behold ! Golf links. The tour is over, for I have nothing at all to say about motoring all along the tram-ridden, scorched, dusty front between Cannes and the frontier of Italy—and beyond.

The Riviera is a very delightful and glorious combination of art and nature—and a great many of them that dwell therein are like unto it.

But as for the Riviera as a motoring centre—napoo !



AMID THE ESTERELS.

"Teneo te, Africa!"—CÆSAR.

CHAPTER XII

ON NORTH AFRICAN MOTORING

THIS sounds very remote, which is why I have thus headed it. But in reality it is nothing of the kind ; just a run from Bordeaux, or from the North, to Marseilles, twenty-eight hours in a beautiful big boat, and there you are at Algiers, with all the most wonderful roads that ever were, with no real other ends to them, waiting for you and your car. Of course, it is not the cheapest form of motor touring, but then it is a very long way to go. Considering how far it is, it is not really expensive, and, if one counts the run across France as part of the trip, the only extras are the boat-tickets and the car fare. Nothing is more expensive in Algeria than elsewhere ; probably to-day it is cheaper than any other part of France.

One of the charms of motoring in

Algeria is the imaginable possibility of adventure. One sees so many new things —that is, if one does not happen to have



There you are at Algiers.

been in the East before. For only geographically is Algeria in the south. When the Moors came West they brought the East with them, and they have left bits of it there still.



A STREET IN ALGIERS.

Also the climate—that is, if one does not go mountaineering, although, it must be confessed, it is quite impossible to get to the desert side of the mountains without climbing over them somewhere or other. They are high, and can be very cold indeed, but underneath, along the coast and to the west where the mountains do not persist, it is said to be quite balmy all the year round, except at the time when it is much too hot to be anything but horrible.

The town of Algiers itself is delightful, and as highly civilised in places as any I ever saw. So civilised, indeed, that in parts of it one almost begins to regard anything Mauresque as a mere pose ; it is out in the country that one realises to the full what interlopers we Europeans are.

I suppose it was originally for reasons not unconnected with keeping the peace that the French built the splendid radial roads that focus at Algiers and spread in every direction east and west and

south. The surfaces are splendid and appear likely to continue so ; the best way to appreciate their goodness is to get on to secondary routes or, worse still, the little roads that web the arteries of the country, so to speak. These test a car, and one does not willingly repeat the experience. But there is seldom any need to use them ; one must not trust all the pretty red lines on the maps, the roads they portray shift with the seasons, and some are said to be as uncertain and fickle as the sea itself. But one can trust the direct roads that I have mentioned, especially as on many of them there is a regular motor-bus service. Prosaic, but very handy for the inhabitants, and, where railways do not exist, they help to keep down the price of petrol.

The hotels are not, in towns of equal size, as good as their French equivalents —which is only natural ; reasons for excellence and comfort exist in France that do not rule in Algiers. At the same time

there is nothing much wrong with the most provincial of them, and I have come across many, in some respects, far more uninviting in England. The food is sound, and the *vins du pays* are often exceedingly pleasant. Local dishes, unless specially cooked for the traveller's consumption, are apt to disagree with one—which, again, is only natural.

Perhaps the scenery is the most attractive part of it all, except the warmth and sunshine of Biskra and the desert on the other side of the northern barrier.

One drives through passes that have tropical flowers and trees at their feet, while their tops are lost in the snows. Above there are always eagles—real eagles—the country seems full of them, and flying like toy kites against the blue, and skittering across the roads are monkeys—real monkeys—the most absurd wild things that nature grows.

There are hot springs and celebrated bathing-places, orange orchards with real spring-guns and savage mastiffs, camels

apparently by the million, chieftains riding richly caparisoned palfreys in red morocco slippers, veiled women, and—mirages. Real mirages, so clear and unmistakable that once we only found out they were mirages because we could not find the indisputable lakes in front of us on the map. I do not want any better proof than that ; and when their beauties disappeared they left the scenery so dull and so blank.

Biskra and Timor are not the only things to see in Algeria ; Tunisia is alongside, and that is just as full, if not fuller, of wonderful things to see. Perhaps its ruins of all kinds, including Carthage and Timgad, are as well preserved as any elsewhere, while undoubtedly in the winter its climate on the whole is an improvement on that of its neighbour.

One can arrive at Algiers, tour all over the country around it, turn east, and leave Africa at Tunis, thus completing a journey of unequalled interest and, usually, much more original than

any that one's friends or neighbours can boast about.

To enjoy the best thing in Algeria in the winter or early spring one need not have a car. The train takes you direct from Algiers to Biskra, and at both places



Algiers—One can loaf in the sun.

one can loaf in the sun—which is the best thing at that time of the year that I, for one, know of. But with a car one can see so much more of it all ; without a car one knows nothing outside the two hotels you stay at, the railway stations, and the immediate vicinity of one's abode. To go by train is not to travel ; one is

merely animated baggage and the prey of all manner of touts and impostors. Besides, new things are always being found that ought to be seen ; and although the railways run through much of the best advertised scenery in North Africa, it very often happens that one passes those beauty spots in the dark or looks out of the wrong window. Algeria and Tunis are really areas untapped by the train, and it is said—and, I believe, truly—that no other country has better roads, go where one pleases. Take, for instance, the Corniche road along the coast to the east of Bougie ; one can imagine nothing finer than this well-laid, boldly-cut shelf under stupendous mountains where huge waves dash in underneath and their spray whirls high up the face of the cliff. Close by, a huge gorge comes down from the high ground around Sétif, and it is amazing to watch the climate change as one drops from sterile snow-clad stony wastes and mountains down to soft tropical trees and flowers where it widens on to the

sheltered beach, all oranges and lemons and sugar-canies and palm trees and vineyards and everything else that pertains to the south one has always read about.

It is impossible to exaggerate concerning the *flora* of this fertile shore, because at Algiers there is a *jardin d'acclimatation* wherein is almost every tree that grows until it gets so big it has to be cut down to make room for a younger brother. Algiers is a microcosm of the whole land, and one does well to stay at the most excellent hotels at Mustapha Superior until one has seen it. It has all the good points of a big French town combined with the savour of the real East, and, if it were not for the plague of guides and their kind that make the streets an occasional misery, I am almost of opinion that one could enjoy the trip almost as much without a car—unless one is aware of the added joy that a good car brings to everything.

As a matter of fact, one need not bring one's own car. There is a very

sound firm that lets out ears and drivers on tour, and, whatever their charges may be, one has saved a good deal by leaving



An unknown, who will demand all sorts of secret commission.

one's own at home, especially if it would have been necessary to bring a chauffeur.

A local driver may be of great value and assistance, otherwise one may have to carry a courier as well in the shape

of an unknown, who will demand all sorts of secret commission that you, in the end, have to pay for, and who may occasionally take his prey to places and hotels for no other reasons than that their proprietors pay him to do so.

“Backsheesh” is said to be an African word—and so is “Tariff.”

I have put in this chapter on Algeria because no one can consider himself an accomplished and thorough motorist unless he has experienced all sorts and kinds of countries and places. And Algeria and Tunis are bits of France; probably, just now, much more so than ever.

No one will regret sampling them for many reasons. Perhaps the principal one that will weigh most with travellers from the North is that here, all through the winter, if one is careful of one's locality, one may easily forget that it is not a far pleasanter time of the year.

Not that it cannot rain or blow or snow in Algiers. It can, but the weather can also be truly delightful.

*“ I have wandered about long enough in the snow,
And now will I dance where the fields are aglow.
O thou land with the beautiful blossoms ! ”*

—FOUQUE.

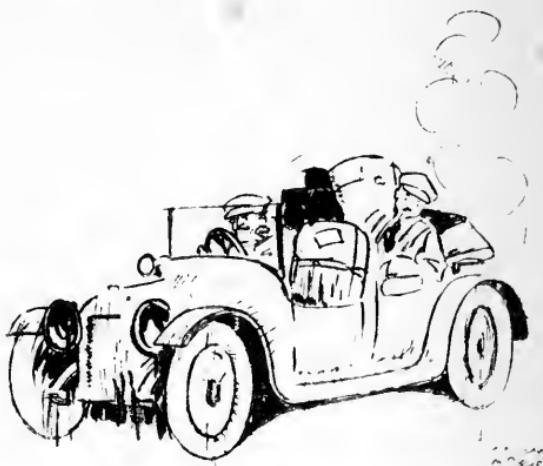
CHAPTER XIII

ON FOREIGN MOTOR TOURING IN GENERAL

THERE was a time—it exists still in the imagination of some people—when motor-ing was the sole pastime of the wealthy. Nowadays it is the economy of the man of moderate means, and, the bigger his family, the more economical it can be. Also, some people still think that a big car—or, say, any car that is not a small car—is a sign of vast possessions. They are wrong. Of course, it can be, but very often a big car is the truest economy in the long run, for an over-crowded and under-powered machine does not—and should not be expected to—last for half the time that a proper-sized motor is capable of. The one wears itself out by doing what it is not built to do; the other merely exercises itself in doing what it was designed for.

There is another argument in favour

of a properly-constructed and decently-driven big car, an argument that I do not think gets the mention it deserves. I am a man who, for my sins and my daily bread, uses a car a great deal in the course



An overcrowded and under-powered machine.

of my work and my pleasure. I can get my daily distance, whatever it may be, out of a big car or a small car without a great deal of difference in time in ordinary localities.

But this is where the distinction comes in. To keep going on a small car tires me to death, where the same journey on

a bigger car only succeeds in making me ready for my meals. There is no use in concealing the matter ; makers of small cars do not pretend otherwise ; the effect of touring in cars that have to be run "all out" for most of the time is very nerve-shaking and wearisome. I say nothing about the effects on the machine itself—that needs no demonstration. Nor do I mention the ever-present necessary annoyance of having to be packed in with one's luggage when one is short of room, for there is precious little pleasure in motor touring when it is easier to stay in one's seat than to get out and stretch one's legs.

I have suffered ; in an early Daimler some twelve years ago—and it was not a new car then—half the pleasure of a very long trip was spoilt by being embedded in luggage, for, though one may start ever so carefully arranged, it is never very long before things happen, and comfort—for that journey, at any rate—is at an end.

Take plenty of luggage, if one has room for it; when one's car is of a respectable horse-power there are excellent means of putting as much as you like—within reason—in places on the body where it will never be in anyone's way, whatever may occur. Little by little we have found this out, and I think the newest bodies will do better still. Avoid top loads, especially when touring in mountainous districts; but be just as careful, when everything is strapped on behind, to look out that evilly-disposed persons do not take unfair advantages of your trustfulness, especially in towns and at meal times.

Mention of meals brings me on to the subject of hotels. To tour with a party in England and to stay at the "best" hotels is often a very ruinous proceeding. But there one has no other choice; it is very seldom that one can trust any other brand of hotel at all. To abide in the hotels of small towns and large villages is to be very brave

and very often to be very uncomfortable. Our licensing laws and our immemorial customs do not tend to encourage British



To tour with a party in England and to stay at the best hotels is a very ruinous proceeding.

hotel-keepers to be enterprising, nor do the habits of their local neighbours assist them in the least.

In France this is all quite different.

A good provincial hotel with a good table and sound wine is a great attraction to all its neighbours, and they, male and female, are proud of it and delight to take their meals at it. Imagine, in England, the local bigwigs and shopkeepers dining at their "Blue Pigs" or their "Rose and Crowns"! One cannot—and more's the pity. Motorists suffer for this neglect, even when the landlord is quite sure he has nothing to learn in the way of entertaining and providing for his fleeting guests.

To me half the joy of touring abroad lies in the certainty that one will get an excellent dinner, clean, airy bedrooms, and as likely as not will discover some local delicacy either on the *menu* or in the wine list, wherever one may stop. I have stayed at many French hotels, and have only been disappointed when they have turned out to be what French *hôteliers* disdainfully call "Swiss" hotels—that is, hotels with lifts and porters that are but invaders of the soil and have

no connection at all with the ordinary run of provincial hostellries.

French "commercial" hotels in big



What the French call disdainfully, "Swiss" hotels.

towns are surprisingly excellent places to stay at; one is safe to get good food, and very often they, as they say, amuse of themselves.

The invaluable "Guide Michelin"—there is no book that can take its place

in the matter of hotels and distances and little maps of towns—gives one all the information requisite as to the names of hotels, and very little practice enables one to deduce from that book's brief catalogue of charges and fittings a fairly safe shot at what one will find. Personally, I trust the “Guide Michelin” in France blindfold concerning hotels, and I want no other assistance.

The motorist in France must not judge too much by the exterior of the platter, and the thousands and thousands of motorists who have patronised them during the last five years can bear me out in this. But even our fighting men do not, except by chance, know of the real hotel-land to the south of Paris in the little towns as far away from the noise of battle as any sheltered spot in our own England.

That is the country I have written of in this volume, and that is the country where motor touring is going to be most enjoyed.

Garages are fair; very likely they will be much better, for most of their staff have had a good deal more to do with cars just lately than ever before. The universal need for petrol is better understood than here, and, as a rule, the proprietors of repair shops are mechanics themselves, and have no use for the class of young gentlemen who sit in the office and inform me that their men are having their dinner.

Nor is France a savage country; one can buy just as easily all kinds of spares or garments as one can at home, and sometimes just as cheaply—it all depends what one wants.

Occasionally, as in England, one will come across innkeepers and tradesmen who act up to the text, “I was a stranger and ye took me in.” Familiarity breeds contempt; perhaps these people exist most often in districts where foreign tourists are most common; in out-of-the-way Departments, where visitors are more rare, I have always found that most people

I have had dealings with will go to any trouble to be of assistance and do what they could for me.

The little French hotel-keepers do not



"I was a stranger and ye took me in."

sell drinks in order to exist ; they rely just as much on all their other wares. In some cases—especially in the Bordeaux country—they get quite hurt if one sniffs at the *vin du pays* put on the table ordinarily and gratuitously and, without even

tasting it, orders from the wine list better-known brands from other districts. Personally, I invariably, when travelling in a wine-growing country, take what is put in front of me, and very seldom have I



In the Bordeaux country they get quite hurt if one sniffs at the *vin du pays* put on the table ordinarily.

had cause to repent. One can indulge in *liqueurs* and *cognac* afterwards at all prices, and the landlord will esteem you for it, though he will not appear offended if one goes out to take one's coffee elsewhere. *Cafés* in France are not as public-houses are here; they form meeting-places, and seem, for most of the inhabitants, to take the place of clubs. One can derive

CAFÉ
VINS
LIQUEURS



Cafés in France are meeting-places.

much amusement in some *cafés*, and very seldom indeed need one be afraid of taking the ladies of one's party into any of them.

The Frenchman always strikes me as



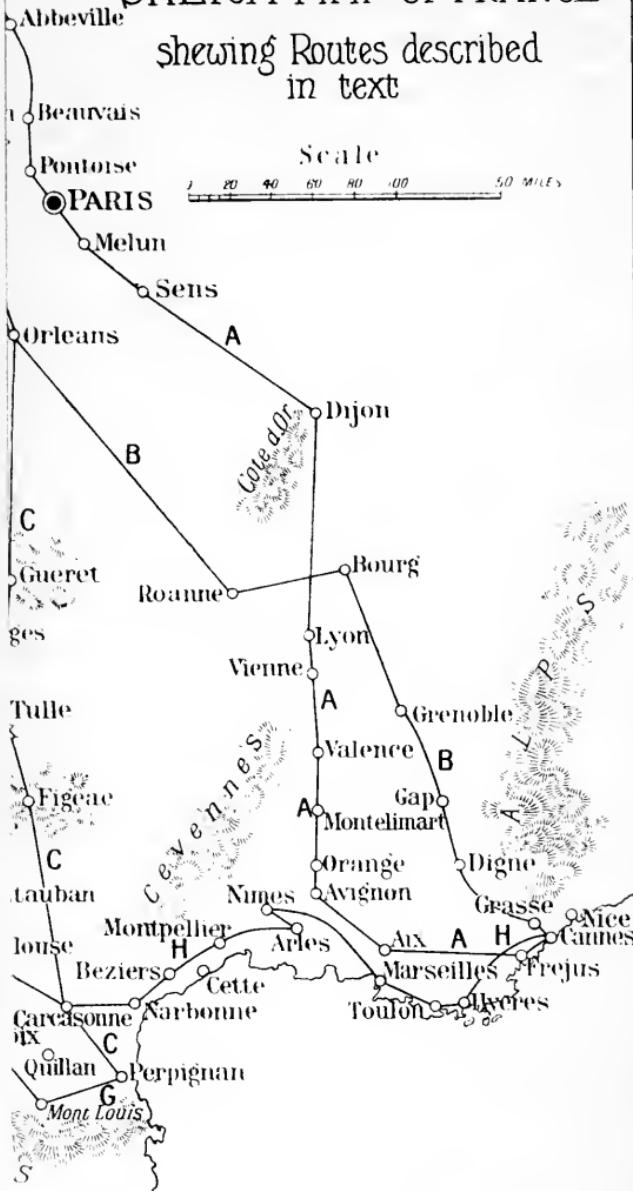
The Frenchman always strikes me as being a great conservative—a man who does not approve of any disorganisation of his times and habits.

a great conservative and a man who does not approve of the disorganisation of his times and habits. If one takes one's *déjeuner* or one's dinner at the usual time, it is generally excellent in quality and moderate in price. But if one

desires an English breakfast, lunch at 1.30, or dinner after eight, his routine is upset, and very naturally one is charged accordingly. A thing which nobody ought to complain about, for when one is in Rome one must do as the Romans do, or suffer for it.

That is not a bad maxim to end up with, for without doubt, if one tries to carry on otherwise, life with the Romans or with the natives of any other lands will not be half so pleasant, and pleasure is what we shall be out to get when we take our Daimlers across the Channel to see our good friends and Allies at home in the Piping Times of Peace.

SKETCH MAP OF FRANCE
shewing Routes described
in text



Route E = Chapter VII.
" F = " VIII.

Route G = Chapter IX.
" H = " XI.



DAIMLER HIRE LIMITED



THE Daimler Hire Service is the most perfect in the world. A magnificent fleet of Limousines, Landauettes, and open Touring Cars is at the service of customers, ready to proceed at a moment's notice on short trips, or the most extended tours in the United Kingdom or the Continent.

The cars are luxuriously equipped and equal in appearance to the finest privately-owned vehicles. The drivers are all carefully trained experts and are thoroughly reliable.

Prices are reasonable, and the service is acknowledged the best.

USE A DAIMLER
AND
TRAVEL IN COMFORT
FOR

*Shopping, Visiting, Country Trips,
Extended Tours, Theatres, Racing, etc.*



Tariff on Application



STORE STREET, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD,
LONDON, W.C.2.

Telephone : 4160 MUSEUM.

Telegrams : "DAIMLERDOM, LONDON."

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

1031 2010-01-01
1031 2010-01-01

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 001 340 463 7

1031
2010-01-01

